



**ZIMBABWE** Full analysis **PLUS**  
Zimbabwean socialists speak out >>Pages 4&5

**MUGABE OUT!**



# Socialist Worker

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**BENEFITS HELL ● CUTS  
● RACISM ● PAY CURBS**

# MISERY IN TORY BRITAIN

by DAVE SEWELL

**TORY CHANCELLOR Philip Hammond's budget will do nothing to end the regime of cuts, poverty and racism.**

A major study last week said austerity politics was linked to 120,000 extra deaths. Spending cuts and a drop in the number of nurses being hired could be causing an extra 100 deaths every day.

The cruel Universal Credit benefit scheme is at the forefront of the Tories' brutal cuts. It means



benefit sanctions and misery for thousands.

Katy—not her real name—is one of thousands of Universal Credit claimants threatened with eviction this winter.

**UNIVERSAL CREDIT**  
**Domestic violence survivor Katy and seven children face eviction threat**

The impact of Universal Credit threatens to drive Katy and her seven children back to the domestic violence they escaped earlier this year.

She fled her abusive partner

earlier this year, leaving behind her home, friends, family and two part-time jobs in London for temporary accommodation in Gravesend, Kent.

But the rules of Universal Credit severely punish being out of work. Katy's family now come under the benefit cap, and it has sliced their income almost in half.

Katy now gets £1,093 a month to pay for everything. This amount is supposed to pay for all the rent, bills, food, clothes,

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## RUSSIA

**Is Putin's Twitter 'troll army' to blame for Brexit?**

RUSSIA IS back as the bogeyman of liberal politics.

At the height of the Cold War the myth was that Russian tanks were minutes away from Western Europe.

Today it's that president Vladimir Putin's army of Twitter bots and hackers has penetrated Western defences. But the truth is scarier still.

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## REFUGEES



**West to blame for Libya's slave auctions**

THE SLAVE auctions of the 21st century take place in Libya—but the biggest culprits are in the British, US and French governments and European Union (EU).

Footage released by CNN news last week showed black men being sold. We should be furious with the Western politicians responsible.

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## JOBS FIGHT

**Work-in and march help to save factory**

WORKERS' action and political pressure have saved jobs, at least for now, at Burntisland Fabrications (BiFab).

A work-in and protests last week saw Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon broker an agreement.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'Free movement promise for bankers'

The Financial Times announces that some people at least will be able to travel freely around Europe

### 'They can barely bring themselves to talk to each other anymore'

One Tory cabinet minister on Philip Hammond and Theresa May

### 'In a dysfunctional cabinet, this is the most important dysfunctional relationship of all'

The Financial Times on Hammond and May

### 'A burning desire to change people's lives for the better'

What former aide to Theresa May Nick Timothy thinks Philip Hammond lacks

### 'It is a tribute to Kate's professionalism that there was no hint of upset as she did her duty'

The Daily Mirror fawns over Kate Middleton's ability to do other things as her uncle was in court for assault



# Tory cuts meant 'economic murder' of 120,000 people

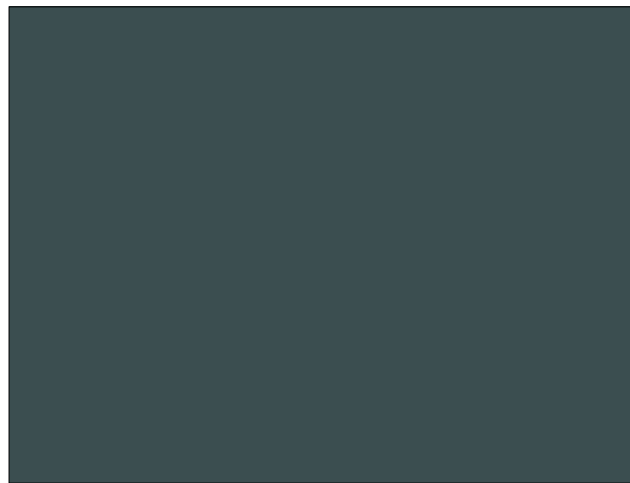
**TORY NHS and social care cuts are "economic murder" and could cause 100 unnecessary deaths a day without emergency funds, a report has warned.**

Already 120,000 have died needlessly since 2010.

The joint study, by researchers at Oxford, Cambridge and University College London, is the first to link cuts in government health and social care spending to higher mortality rates in England.

Cambridge University's Professor Lawrence King, who contributed to the study, said, "Austerity does not promote growth or reduce deficits—it is bad economics."

"It is also a public health disaster. It is not an exaggeration to call it economic murder."



PROTEST AGAINST NHS cuts earlier this year

The squeeze on public spending and the drop in nurses since 2010 has put over-60s and care home residents most at risk, says the

study. Published in the British Medical Journal, it found that between 2001 and 2010 the number of

nurses rose on average by 1.61 percent a year.

From 2010 to 2014, with the Tories in office, the rise was just 0.07 percent—20 times lower than the previous decade.

Spending on social care fell by 1.9 percent every year over the same period.

The study found the number of deaths in England fell by an average of 0.77 percent every year between 2001 and 2010, but rose by an average of 0.87 percent every year between 2011 and 2014.

Researchers said it would take an extra £6.3 billion every year to plug England's "mortality gap". The authors said the study indicated lower spending on health and social care is "associated with a substantial mortality gap".

**FREE SCHOOLS** have been "ineffective" in improving school quality, a major report by the Education Policy Institute has found. It added that while free schools take fewer poorer children than other schools in the same areas.

And claims that free schools are popular with parents do "not appear to be supported by the available data". Free schools received the lowest numbers of first preference applications than any other school type.

Ineffective

**OVER 1,000** nurseries and childminders have gone out of business in England since the Tories were elected in 2015 with a promise of 30 hours of free childcare for working parents. Ofsted figures show there has been a net loss of 1,146 nurseries and childminders.

## No Universal Credit in time for Christmas

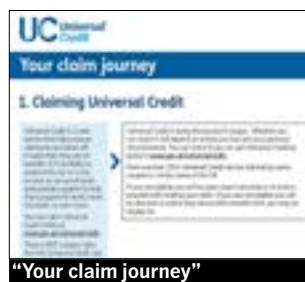
**THOUSANDS OF** low paid workers are to be kicked off the Universal Credit benefit just in time for Christmas and forced to reapply in January.

Universal Credit is paid monthly, supposedly to get unemployed claimants used to the idea of working and getting a monthly salary.

But many low paid workers are paid weekly—including 67,000 Universal Credit claimants.

Most months they'll have four paydays. But in December there are five weekends which for many people means five paydays.

To Universal Credit's number-crunching computer, their income will have gone up by



20 percent—potentially to be too high to claim.

You might think this would push already poor workers into financial crisis, but fortunately the government's website is on hand.

It helpfully tells claimants to "budget for a potential change" in their benefits and then "re-apply the following month".

## Investigator says IPCC is corrupt and prejudiced

**THE Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)** is riddled with corruption and discriminatory practices, according to a whistleblower.

Carol Howard, a former investigator at the police watchdog, claims senior executives "believe their duty is not to investigate officers but to protect the reputation of the police force concerned and its senior officers in particular".

She also says that some IPCC investigators



support the racist police officers whom they are investigating.

As a result they try to "frustrate, delay, restrict and close down investigations" to protect the targets of their inquiries.

Howard is suing the IPCC for racial discrimination and victimisation.

She claims that other black and ethnic minority IPCC officers told her they were also "treated differently" from their white colleagues and that there was a "pattern of hostile conduct".

## GOING DOWN



### Tommy Robinson

● Founder of the fascist English Defence League and former British National Party member has been stripped of his "blue tick" on Twitter.

● US white supremacist Richard Spencer lost his too

● Robinson whined, "The truth is now hate speech."

● Spencer complained, "Verified no more! Is it not okay to be proudly White?"

## FIGURE IT OUT

141

number of days the House of Lords sat last year

455

number of Lords whose expenses are higher than average pay

£462,000

amount of cash claimed by 33 peers who didn't speak or sit on committees

£19 MILLION

bill for Lord's expenses in 2016/17

## Hammond says there are no unemployed

**THE** millionaire Tory chancellor has claimed, "There are no unemployed people". In fact the number of people in work fell by 14,000 in the three months to September, according to the Office for National Statistics.

It's the biggest drop since early 2015.

At the same time, full time jobs on offer dropped by 29,000 and more people who work part time say they want a full time job.

The number officially unemployed dropped too—the total number officially unemployed is 1.42 million.

Or nobody if you are the chancellor.

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# Tory benefit fraud spells eviction for the poorest

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transport and everything for a family of eight.

Once the rent and council tax are paid they are left with just over £2 each per day.

Arrears have built up, and now Gravesend Council has warned it will evict them unless Katy pays it money she has no way of getting.

Katy told Socialist Worker, "What they are doing is not fair.

"I don't know what's going to happen to me and my family, all because I decided to get out of an abusive relationship."

Her experience of Universal Credit has been the opposite of the government's boasts.

Universal Credit is supposedly about helping people into work. But having no money for childcare and no guarantee she can stay in Gravesend makes it impossible to get a job.

"I can't work because my youngest is only three years old and there's no one here to look after her," Katy said.

"And there aren't many jobs that will take you for two hours in the day."

## Simplifying

Universal Credit is supposedly about simplifying the benefits system.

But people's lives don't always fit into its boxes, and the reality can be a bewildering catch-22 situation.

Katy said, "When I was put in emergency accommodation, I was told Universal Credit would pay the rent.

"When I went to the jobcentre to claim it, they said no—I'd have to go to the council to claim a Discretionary Housing Payment.

"But the council said they'd only pay a third of the rent and I'd have to find the rest. Now they are looking to evict me.

"This week I'm giving them £800 and it might all go to paying off the arrears. If I don't find another £400



KATY HAS been threatened with eviction

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

for this month's rent they're going to kick me out."

The government is rolling out Universal Credit slowly and changing the rules as it goes.

But no-one can move back onto their old benefits, however their circumstances change.

Katy said, "Now people with more than two children aren't supposed to

be on Universal Credit. If I started claiming today, I would be on child tax credits and income support instead.

"And Gravesend jobcentre doesn't do Universal Credit yet. They have to link up with my old jobcentre in London and have them handle my claim even though I live in Kent."

Benefit cuts leave claimants at the

mercy of their councils, and Tory-run Gravesend has been no help. "They just say it's not their problem, I have to find the money," Katy said.

"They did say if I was struggling I could contact social services.

"But I have enough anxieties about social services taking my children away.

"I don't want them to come knocking at the door simply because I'm having financial difficulties."

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn revealed last week that one landlord in Lincolnshire has sent hundreds of eviction notices to tenants on Universal Credit.

## Debate

There's now some debate about the details of the benefit's implementation.

MPs and the government are haggling over whether new claimants should have to wait four, five or six weeks before receiving a single penny.

Labour has called for its rollout to be paused.

Katy said, "I think they should scrap it—with no delay."

She added, "They are putting me under immense stress and pressure. It is the government's duty to protect me and my family from this domestic violence.

"That is what they say—don't put up with it, we can help. But they don't help.

"What options are they leaving me other than to go back to London where I've got friends and jobs, but where the man is who I fled because of domestic violence?"

The Tories have got to go, and we need much more resistance from the trade union and Labour Party leaders to force them out now.

Unite Community has called a Stop and Fix Universal Credit day of action on Saturday 2 December, for more information see [bit.ly/2BbJEwf](http://bit.ly/2BbJEwf)

## Jobcentre parties are an 'insult'

AS JOBCENTRES switches to Universal Credit (UC), sick bosses are holding "rollout parties" to celebrate.

This is partly a way of winning over staff who are sick of the extra training and often worried about the effects of UC.

But Ursula, who claimed UC at the first batch of jobcentres in Tameside, Greater Manchester, slammed the parties as "callous".

"Tameside was the test project," she told Socialist Worker. "It was really clear it didn't work in this constituency. They have since rolled it out across the board, which was one hell of a surprise to me because it sucks."

Ursula claimed UC for five months, during which time she had to sell her belongings in order to eat.

She said, "My finances have still not recovered from the debt I had to get myself into during that five months. Most weeks I work between 65 and 70 hours to try to scramble out.

"I started having severe panic attacks and crippling depression."

Ursula asked, "How can they celebrate people being put into poverty, food banks being overstretched, rises in suicide and homelessness?"

Instead of parties there should be protests, one jobcentre worker in the PCS union told Socialist Worker.

"There is a case for holding protests at offices on rollout day and highlighting the impact of Universal Credit," they said.

Find out when your jobcentre is switching over to Universal Credit at [bit.ly/2zwIMBo](http://bit.ly/2zwIMBo)

## Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working class rhetoric of the mainstream press. We publish stories of successful strikes, protests and pickets that beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

### I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

Socialist Worker first reported the true facts of the Southern Rail dispute 20 months ago and is still doing so today. Socialist Worker is indeed always fighting

for working class people's rights.

**Dean**  
Southern Rail train guard



To donate go to [www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal)

Call 020 7840 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW

## IN THIS WEEK

1945

### General Motors workers strike

Some 320,000 members of the US UAW car workers union struck for 113 days.

They demanded a 30 percent pay rise.

It was the largest strike of it's kind at the time and the workers won a 17.5 percent rise.





# Thousands on streets demand a future with no Mugabe

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEL-EVANS

**ZIMBABWEAN president Robert Mugabe was resisting his removal as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.**

The military seized control of the capital Harare last Wednesday. It follows a spiralling political crisis facing the regime, with rival factions of the ruling Zanu PF party jostling for power (see right).

Mugabe held back from resigning in a speech on Sunday—and then failed to resign again by the military's deadline of 10am the following day.

But pressure was mounting for Mugabe to go, both within the regime and on the streets. The leadership of Zanu PF on Sunday expelled Mugabe and his wife Grace, who had hoped to succeed him.

The ascendant faction within Zanu PF, backed by the military, now hopes to install Emmerson Mnangagwa as president. Mnangagwa was vice president until he was sacked earlier this month—and offers no real alternative (see right).

Anger has also exploded onto the streets. The working class has suffered under Mugabe's repressive regime and Grace Mugabe is hated for the family's lavish lifestyle while ordinary people languish in poverty. Students at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare organised protests on Monday.

## Withdrawal

They demanded the withdrawal of Grace Mugabe's PhD and the resignation of vice chancellor Levi Nyagura.

This followed a 30,000-strong demonstration in Harare on Saturday of last week.

The military backed the demonstration to put pressure on Mugabe and some of the slogans reflected that. There were placards reading, "Not coup but



Grace Mugabe

## BACK STORY

**Mugabe has been president of Zimbabwe since 1980**

● He was born in 1924 in Southern Rhodesia, in what was then a British colony

● Mugabe helped to form the Zimbabwe African National Union in 1963

● From the mid 1980s his government came under pressure from international bankers

● After losing a referendum on a new constitution in 2000 he has fought to consolidate his power

cool" and "Zimbabwe "Army—voice of the people". But the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), the Socialist Workers Party's sister organisation in Zimbabwe, was also on the demonstration.

One ISO member told Socialist Worker, "There were street parties taking place, a sense of celebration even though Mugabe had not yet gone."

This has to be an opportunity to topple the regime, not replace Mugabe with Mnangagwa and the military. Sections of the ruling class are now pushing for a "grand coalition" of the Mnangagwa faction, the military and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

While founded by the unions, the MDC now supports neoliberalism.

The working class will have to assert independent demands to avoid this danger.

"We're discussing how we can further broaden the issues and include workers' demands and putting forward the idea of calling for a general strike," they said.

The working class in Zimbabwe has previously shown its power.

Wielding that again could topple Mugabe—and scrap the whole rotten regime.

**DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDING the resignation of Mugabe in Harare**

# The descent of an anti-colonialist hero into authoritarian nationalist

**ROBERT MUGABE was a hero of the struggle against colonialism and first leader of independent Zimbabwe. He then became a compromiser with imperialism—and finally a dictator.**

When Mugabe was born in Southern Rhodesia, 225,000 whites ruled over five million black people. Many activists, including Mugabe, believed armed struggle would be needed to shake off white rule.

He helped to form the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) in 1963, and was jailed almost immediately.

In prison he adopted a Maoist version of Marxism, particularly focused on the potential for peasant resistance and guerrilla war.

## Crisis

By 1978 the white regime was in crisis and desperate for a deal.

Talks made electoral improvements—but Mugabe also made key concessions. Much to the horror of the elites who had agreed the deal, Zanu won



Robert Mugabe in 1978

57 of the 100 seats and Mugabe became prime minister. The first effect was a big improvement in ordinary people's lives.

But from the mid-1980s, as crisis hit the world economy, the international bankers and capitalists stepped up the pressure on Mugabe.

Mugabe's government compromised with international financiers—and all the gains of

the early years of independence were wiped out. The trade union movement began to break away from Mugabe and formed the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

## Occupations

After losing a referendum in 2000 Mugabe tried to rebuild support by encouraging occupations of white-owned farms. He defeated MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai in the 2002 and 2005 elections through fraud, violence and brutal intimidation.

After losing in 2008 Mugabe unleashed the fury of the state machine against the opposition, then tricked them into a bogus power sharing agreement.

The West denounces Mugabe for his attacks on white farmers. That was never his crime.

His national liberation politics did not focus on workers' power.

Without a consistent focus on that force Mugabe was caught between imperialism and anti working class authoritarian nationalism.



Last year saw protests and strikes

# Growing economic crisis created chaos in regime

THE REGIME has been split about how to deal with a spiralling economic crisis. A severe deterioration in the recent weeks lies behind the military coup and attempts to oust Robert Mugabe as president.

Zimbabwean socialist Munya explained the splits within the ruling Zanu PF party.

"This is a crystallisation of a faction fight within the ruling class and reflects an economic crisis that has significantly deteriorated," he told Socialist Worker.

"There have been major price rises and some goods are not available."

Mugabe tried to deal with Zimbabwean

capitalism's crisis by working with likes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Sacked vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa, who is backed by the military, is now pushing full-blooded free market reforms.

"Mugabe never fully accepted the neoliberal agenda," explained Munya.

"The Mnangagwa faction includes the former finance minister who worked closely with the IMF."

Mnangagwa's answer is to open up Zimbabwe to international capital and normalise relations with Western imperialism including former colonial rulers Britain.

That's why the

British establishment is gloating at Mugabe's misfortune—and it would happily work with a new military-backed regime.

And that's also why the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) could be part of a new set up.

Munya said, "The MDC elites are likely to be supportive because they also want more neoliberalism and a restoration of relations with the West."

The Zimbabwean working class has suffered under imperialism and their rulers' free market reforms and austerity.

The answer is not more of the same policies—but to revolt against them.



Emmerson Mnangagwa

the face of the Deep State—the junta that has ruled Zimbabwe for the last decade," it wrote in Socialist Worker (Zimbabwe).

"As Mnangagwa himself admitted it was him and the generals who saved Zanu PF after their defeat by Morgan

Tsvangirai and the MDC in the March 2008 election.

"They organised a scorched earth policy in which hundreds of opposition fighters were killed."

Mnangagwa's willingness to open up the economy more has won him the backing of imperialist powers.

The ISO described him as "the darling of the capitalists, white farmers, British and Chinese imperialists".

"Mugabe has failed and he must go, but the working class must not be used by the elites to replace him with a neoliberal monster alternative," it added.

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

# CRISIS OF POLITICS DOGS EUROPEAN RULING CLASS

UNTIL THIS week the Tories looked like the weakest government in the European Union (EU). That's impressive given the competition.

The Dutch prime minister took a record 225 days to form a cabinet.

And the Spanish state is bitterly fighting a Catalan bid for independence.

Italy's political establishment is so threadbare that even Silvio Berlusconi—banned from taking office due to a fraud conviction—is attempting a comeback.

But what really sent a shiver down the spines of the entire European ruling class was the news on Monday that German chancellor Angela Merkel was faltering.

Attempts to build a new coalition government after last month's elections had reached an impasse. Merkel said she would rather call new elections than form a minority government.

It's always possible that Merkel was bluffing to bring her prospective coalition partners to heel. But the mere possibility of failure was seen as a dangerous sign of instability in German politics.

And Merkel's problems

reverberate across Europe. She is the longest-serving head of state in the G20 after Russia's Vladimir Putin, and led the European Union (EU) through its economic crucifixion of Greece.

There are common factors behind the political paralysis of European states.

Merkel's woes are often blamed on her decision to welcome refugees in 2015. But the decision came only after the refugees themselves had already made it a fact by fighting to cross borders.

Merkel's party rapidly turned back to racist scapegoating.

The same pattern played out in elections in France, Austria and the Netherlands just in the last

**There are common factors behind the political paralysis of European states**

# STATE PROTECTS THE COPS

WITHIN 70 minutes of coming into contact with the cops Rashan Charles was dead.

We know that two police officers were involved with the restraint and arrest of Rashan in east London in July.

We are not allowed to know the cops' names.

A coroner ruled last week they have the right to remain anonymous at his inquest.

Mary Hassell said it was "necessary in the interests of

justice." Rashan's family rightly described it as "outrageous".

Meanwhile, we know that well over 1,000 organisations were spied on by undercover cops.

We know that they deliberately formed sexual relationships and had children with women in some of the groups.

We know they spied on the family of Stephen Lawrence.

We are not allowed to know the cops' names.

The judge of the delayed inquiry into police infiltration said the real

names of undercover officers "will generally not be published".

Justice Mitting cited the officers' health and a wish to maintain privacy as reasons for protecting their identities, and also for reasons of national security.

The inquiry started three years ago and no evidence has been heard.

Keeping the cops safe from scrutiny is a very British tradition which both the undercover inquiry and the Rashan Charles inquest seem determined to continue.

# STAND UP TO RACISM ACTIVISTS' DIARY

**Saturday 9 December**  
Collect for the SUTR and Care4Calais Winter Appeal. Join the delegation to Calais

**Saturday 10 February**  
Come to SUTR's Trade Union Conference to build the fight against racism at work

**Saturday 17 March**  
SUTR national demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Cardiff



For more details go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)



## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Fiddling the figures can't end Tory crisis

**PHILIP HAMMOND**, the Tory chancellor, likes to present himself as a safe pair of hands. He's nicknamed "spreadsheet Phil". Boring maybe, but reliable. But he's been responsible for two of the biggest media pratfalls of the present government, which is saying something.

The first was when he referred to the European Union as the enemy. Then on Sunday he told Andrew Marr, "There are no unemployed people" in Britain.

Both these seem Freudian slips, which reveal more than the speaker intended. Hammond showed first that even pro-Remain Tories like him have an antagonistic attitude to Brussels. And all true followers of the neoliberal economic doctrines of Milton Friedman & Co believe that unemployment is voluntary. Some workers simply choose not to accept a job at the wage that is on offer.

Hammond's blunder came when he was doing a round of the studios to sell the budget he unveils on Wednesday.

As it happens, unemployment is comparatively low by the standards of the neoliberal era—1.42 million, or 4.3 percent of the workforce. Of course these figures don't capture the people who are either underemployed or so discouraged that they have stopped looking for work.

Neoliberal economists argue that unemployment may be close to what Friedman called its "natural rate", which is dictated by wages and productivity. They worry that if it falls lower, this will lead to workers demanding higher wages and thereby pushing up the rate of inflation.

So the Bank of England has started to raise interest rates to prevent unemployment falling too much.

Unfortunately there is very little sign of wages rising, despite the squeeze on living standards caused by higher prices. The shock of the Brexit vote made the pound fall against other currencies, which pushed up import prices.

Pressure on real pay, along with the erosion of the welfare state since 2010, was a major factor in Labour's advance in June's general election.

The Financial Times newspaper listed the resulting demands on Hammond from panicky Tory backbenchers "to lift the public sector pay cap, abandon the freeze on working age benefits, increase spending on the NHS, freeze fuel duty, fix the broken housing market and deliver on the Conservatives' manifesto promise to raise income tax thresholds".

### Pushed

Hammond's problem is that he's also inherited his predecessor George Osborne's commitment to continue cutting government spending and borrowing. He's pushed back Osborne's targets, but he still intends to reduce borrowing to 2 percent of national income by 2021-22.

But if the economy continues to grow sluggishly it will be impossible, without a fundamental shift, for the Tories both to meet this target and match the kind of spending promises Labour made in its election manifesto.

One particular problem is the stagnation in the growth of productivity since the 2008 financial crash. Rising productivity—which means workers produce more in an hour of labour—is one of the main drivers of capitalist economic growth. But there has been a general productivity slowdown in advanced capitalist economies since 2008.

Productivity growth is said to have fallen sharply in finance. This kind of claim has to be examined critically. Banking workers are not what Adam Smith and Karl Marx called productive labourers. In other words, they don't create profits but enable their bosses to appropriate some of the profits created elsewhere, in production.

So low productivity growth in finance means that bank profits have fallen, as other statistics confirm. But this is a big deal for British capitalism, because the City of London is so central to it. Productivity growth has also dropped in manufacturing, which remains a strategic sector.

This reflects the fact that capitalists generally have been holding back investments that would introduce new technologies and raise productivity because they aren't confident about getting big enough profits.

So Hammond is in a bind. He's trying to increase his room for manoeuvre by fiddling around with the figures—thus housing associations have just been taken out of the public borrowing figures. But this won't give him the space to counter the Tories' unpopularity and Labour's advance.

# Work-in and march helps to keep the BiFab factory open

A new deal has given workers in Fife some breathing space, report **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** and **Raymie Kiernan**

**WORKERS' ACTION** and **political pressure** have saved jobs, at least for now, at **Burntisland Fabrications (BiFab)**.

A work-in and protests last week saw Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon broker an agreement.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) was under pressure to play up its left face—and wanted to avoid a real fight with the unions.

The Fife-based offshore windfarm manufacturer, which has a workforce of over 1,400 across Scotland, faced bankruptcy. It had completed 77 percent of its work on the Beatrice Wind Farm, but had only been paid for 40 percent.

Bosses at SLH, SSE and JCE Offshore, which run the renewable energy project in the North Sea, agreed a financial rescue package.

But the deal only guarantees work until 2019 at the latest when the wind farm is supposed to become fully operational.

### Illusions

A GMB union member told Socialist Worker, "This is good news because it keeps the yard open, but we're under no illusions—it's a short term fix."

"The contract is over 75 percent completed and a lot of subcontractors will begin to be paid off."

"This gives us some



breathing space between now and March 2019, but we need lasting employment."

Sturgeon had just returned from a United Nations (UN) conference on climate change in Bonn in Germany.

At the conference she had called for "urgent action in the next two years" and said the Scottish government was "determined to lead by example".

**WORKERS MARCHED** on the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh last week

PICTURES: GMB SCOTLAND

Those words would have rung particularly hollow had Sturgeon allowed BiFab to go to the wall.

The firm shifted from supplying the North Sea oil and gas industry to producing wind turbines in recent years.

The looming bankruptcy also took place against the backdrop of the Scottish Labour Party leadership contest (see below).

The SNP wants to outflank Scottish Labour, which made some gains in the general election in June.

Over 800 workers rallied outside the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood last Thursday after a march organised by the Unite and GMB unions, and the STUC.

Workers shouted, "We

demand the right to work" and heckled MSPs saying, "You'd better back us up".

And workers had also begun a "work-in" which saw union shop stewards controlling movements in and out of the yard. The march down the Royal Mile in Edinburgh was the turning point," said the GMB member.

"When you hear from politicians that we're a highly skilled workforce that's just words. But the demonstration showed that the workforce was willing to stand up and persuade them to do something."

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## 'Corbynism has come to Scotland'

**SCOTTISH Labour** members and supporters have elected left wing candidate **Richard Leonard** as their party's new leader.

Some 51.8 percent voted for Leonard while the right's candidate **Anas Sarwar** took 48.2 percent.

But among affiliated supporters—trade union members—Leonard took more than three quarters of the vote.

Leonard said that Labour would be a "movement for socialism".

His victory reflects the growing strength of the left in Labour.



Richard Leonard (right) with BiFab workers (see main story)

**Jim Monaghan**, a Labour Party activist in Glasgow, told Socialist Worker, "This is part of the new mood of members of the party."

"There's new people joining and getting involved in other ways."

"Corbynism is finally coming to Scotland."

Leonard's victory can help Labour recover—but it won't be enough. Labour's support in Scotland has suffered because it opposed independence and its councillors have imposed cuts.

For a longer version go to [bit.ly/2j9tyuQ](http://bit.ly/2j9tyuQ)

### FIGURE IT OUT

**51.8%**

voted for left wing candidate **Richard Leonard** to be the new Labour party leader in Scotland

**48.2%**

voted for the candidate backed by the right, **Anas Sarwar**

**77%**

of trade union affiliates voted for Leonard



# No evidence for racist smears against Glasgow Roma people

A report by the Times newspaper last week claimed that Roma people in Glasgow routinely sexually exploit children. The claims are completely unfounded, as **Sadie Robinson** reports

**A CHARITY supporting Roma people in Glasgow has denied reports that Roma families in the city are routinely sexually exploiting their children.**

The Times newspaper claimed last week that Roma families are selling their children for sex on the streets of Govanhill. The claims led to a spate of other media reports focusing on alleged abuse by Roma people.

Yet even the Times quoted a community worker who, said, "The majority of the Roma people I work with work for a living, look after their children, send them to school and college and want the best for them."

"You don't hear about them because they live quietly and don't cause any trouble."

The Friends of Romano Lav charity called the allegations in the Times "spurious and unproved". It said, "Issues of child protection should not be racialised. Such reporting is harmful to ongoing community development work."

The charity added that it had seen no "instances of the child protection issues that The Times described". It said that anyone with evidence of abuse should report it to the police.

Local council minutes from September 2015 refer to "child prostitution within Govanhill" and say that children had been seen "wandering the streets at night". The minutes don't seem to mention whether this is a problem within any particular ethnic group.

## Investigate

Police Scotland said it would investigate the claims, but that there is "no information or intelligence to substantiate" them currently.

The Times claimed the abuse has taken place "for more than a decade" but that the authorities failed to act for "fear of being called racist".

This reporting follows a tradition of treating certain ethnic groups as responsible for particular problems in society.

In Rotherham, the Times claimed that cops failed to tackle abusers because they were Asian.

Last week it made much of the "disturbing parallels" between Govanhill and Rotherham.

The racist implication of this reporting is that ethnic minorities are less likely to be charged with crimes. The opposite is true.

Any allegations of abuse should be taken seriously. But there is a problem with mainstream newspapers using allegations and cases to encourage racism.

Victims of child sexual exploitation—and abusers—come from all



CELEBRATING THE Roma community in Glasgow

PICTURE: STEPHEN MCBROOM

backgrounds. Pushing the idea that Roma or Asian people are more likely to abuse children increases racism and takes attention away from abusers who don't fit that profile.

Tellingly, The Times added, "At a time when sexual exploitation is being investigated at the highest layers of our society, there needs to be just as much attention given to what is happening in areas of deprivation."

It may be that Tory-supporting papers prefer to put the spotlight on ordinary people instead of those at the top of society.



## On other pages...

Schools inspector targets Muslim primary school students >>Page 20

## ISLAMOPHOBIA

### Fans say no to the FLA

THE RACIST Football Lads Alliance (FLA) is set to march alongside a group called Veterans Against Terrorism in Edinburgh on Saturday.

The FLA has already held two large demonstrations in London, featuring racist chants and speakers. It claims to be against terrorism, but is building a dangerous Islamophobic street movement.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and others had already called an anti-racist event in Edinburgh at the same time. Saturday is also the day of the Scottish TUC's annual anti-racist march in Glasgow.

An SUTR statement raising concerns about the FLA march has



FLA supporters in London

been signed by trade union bodies, campaigns and politicians. These include the football-focused Show Racism the Red Card.

SUTR supporters leafletted four of the six Scottish Premiership matches taking place last weekend, at the grounds of Hearts, Hibernian, Dundee and Rangers.

A history of anti-Catholic sectarianism among some Rangers fans makes them a key target for the FLA. But campaigners got an overwhelmingly good response.

Jim Main of Glasgow SUTR told Socialist Worker, "Most Rangers fans were quite happy we were doing it, and we got some very positive comments."

"One of those leafletting with us was a Rangers fan in his top, who had leafletted his coach on the way and went in to watch the match afterwards. It's only a minority who are racist."

"Our activity gave confidence to those Rangers fans who are anti-racist and might be arguing with their mates."

For details of the Edinburgh event and Glasgow demonstration, go to [bit.ly/2zSTYLi](http://bit.ly/2zSTYLi)

## Detention centres slammed

**CAMPAIGNERS** protested outside the Dungavel immigration detention centre in Scotland on Saturday.

Some 30,000 people a year are detained indefinitely at "immigration removal centres". But the centres have come under scrutiny.

G4S, the private company that runs the Brook House detention centre near Gatwick airport, has reportedly commissioned an independent review into its running of the centre.

Undercover footage obtained by the BBC showed guards "mocking, abusing and even assaulting detainees".

Brook House boss Ben Saunders previously ran Medway children's prison for G4S before it dropped the contract after abuse and corruption was exposed.

This follows a damning prison inspectors' report into the Yarl's Wood detention centre last week, and calls for MPs to abolish indefinite detention.





## IN BRIEF

## New protests in Togo defy regime

A WAVE of protests in Togo last week demanded dictator Faure Gnassingbe's resignation. Tens of thousands marched through the capital Lome last Saturday.

Gnassingbe and his father Gnassingbe Eyadema have governed the West African country for more than half a century.

Protests have rocked the regime since August, defied its brutal repression and caused a political crisis.

Gnassingbe is also under pressure from sections of the Togolese ruling class and the old colonial power France which fears losing a loyal regime.

## Egypt activists returned to jail

EGYPTIAN HUMAN rights lawyer and socialist Mahienour el-Massry has been jailed again alongside co-defendant Moatasem Medhat.

They are awaiting trial in a case against a group of lawyers and activists which will be heard on 30 December.

Mahienour and five others are



Mahienour el-Massry

charged with protesting against the transfer of the Tiran and Sanafir Islands to Saudi Arabia, illegal gathering, insulting the president and thuggery.

In 2015 Mahienour was jailed for over a year in a separate case relating to protests over the murder of Khaled Said by police in Alexandria.

Go to [facebook.com/freemahienour](https://facebook.com/freemahienour) and [egyptsolidarityinitiative.org](https://egyptsolidarityinitiative.org)

## Australia LGBT+ fight will go on

AUSTRALIANS VOTED in favour of legalising marriage equality, sparking celebrations last week.

The resounding yes vote of 61.6 percent and high turnout of 79.5 percent reflects the very strong public opinion in favour of marriage equality. This is a result of years of campaigning.

But legislation still has to be debated in parliament and passed.

And the hard right is pushing for exemptions to anti-discrimination law to allow homophobia to continue under the cover of religious freedom.

Longer article at [bit.ly/2jMHKOp](https://bit.ly/2jMHKOp)

# Fears in Lebanon as its people 'see war coming'

by NICK CLARK

**ORDINARY PEOPLE** in Lebanon have begun stockpiling food and supplies, fearing that regional giant Saudi Arabia will push the country into civil war.

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is trying to marginalise the powerful Lebanese political movement and militant group Hizbollah.

It's part of Saudi Arabia's campaign against Hizbollah's backer Iran. Lebanese civilians told news network Al Jazeera they fear the regional rivalry could tear their society apart.

Ahmed Tajeldin Abdullah said, "Iran and Saudi Arabia are fighting for power, and I am afraid they will use Lebanon as their battlefield."

"I can already see a war coming. I have a daughter who's just 13 days old. I'm afraid for my children's lives."

Saudi Arabia led threats against Hizbollah and Iran at a meeting of Arab foreign ministers on Sunday.

Earlier last week Saudi foreign minister Adel el-Jubeir claimed that Hizbollah, which is part of the Lebanese coalition government, had "kidnapped the Lebanese system".

He denounced Hizbollah as a "terrorist organisation used by Iran to destabilise Lebanon and the region".

## Force

Saudi Arabia appeared to force Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri to resign earlier this month.

Hariri resigned with a surprise speech from Saudi capital Riyadh, denouncing Iran and Hizbollah, then disappeared for more than a week. Lebanese politicians accused Saudi Arabia of holding Hariri hostage.

President Michel Aoun has refused to accept Hariri's resignation unless he tenders it in person in Lebanon.

Hariri was set to finally return to Lebanon's capital Beirut and confirm his resignation on Wednesday.

The crisis in Lebanon and the growing confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran are part of the fallout of the wars in Syria and Iraq.

Two blocs of rival powers are vying with each other for control of a region hollowed out by war.

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman

AN INTERVIEW with ousted prime minister Saad Hariri plays on the TV screens in a Beirut cafe

Iran, Russia and Turkey were set to hold a joint summit on Syria in Russian city Sochi on Wednesday. Representatives of various groups opposed to Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad were set to meet for a summit in Saudi Arabia on the same day.

Western allies Saudi Arabia and Israel are also working more closely together against Iran, despite Saudi Arabia's official position of not negotiating with Israel.

Israeli minister Yuval Steinitz confirmed his government had "covert" contacts with Saudi Arabia to "help us stop Iran".

Their tightening relationship is bad news for Palestinians.

Recent reports suggest the US wants the Palestinian Authority (PA) to accept a deal allowing Israel to annexe even more of the West Bank. Israel has occupied the Palestinian West Bank for 50 years.

The PA is said to have so far opposed this but it is reportedly under pressure from Saudi Arabia to accept the US's demands.

A deal would allow Saudi Arabia to present its relationship with Israel as acceptable to other Arab states.

Palestinians, Lebanese, and ordinary people across the Middle East will suffer as the two states—backed by the US and Britain—drive towards yet another war.

## Sexual harassment at top level of US politics

THE SEXUAL harassment scandal at the top of US society has moved further into the political establishment.

Republican senatorial candidate for Alabama Roy Moore faces multiple allegations of initiating sexual relations with women who were under the age of consent at the time.

And photographs have emerged of Democratic senator Al Franken sexually assaulting a female reporter while she was sleeping.

US president Donald Trump ignored the allegations against Moore, tweeting, "The Al Franken picture is really bad, speaks a thousand words."

This is from the man who said of women he would "grab them by the pussy." Twelve women have separately accused Trump of sexual assault and harassment.

The CNN news network interviewed 50 women—current or former Washington aides and politicians. Most had either experienced sexual

Hypocrite—Donald Trump

harassment or assault or personally knew someone who had.

One congresswoman said of her male colleagues, "Half are harassers."

The Women's March Alliance has called a demonstration in New York City on 20 January 2018 to mark a year since Trump's inauguration.

This kind of pressure, and other movements from below, can build the pressure on those at the top of US society.

## Let's scrap Universal Credit

I HAVE met several people who are now on Universal Credit (UC) and it is causing great hardship.

A woman who had moved here from another area, now on UC, was surviving on £28 a week.

Her rent was being paid but she is still paying off the "advance payment" that she was forced to take out to get through the waiting period.

Like many others on UC she cannot afford to have her heating on even though she has had two heart attacks.

She said she was prepared to work for a few hours a week to top up her income.

But once she has taken her bus fares into account she is likely to be working for a very low hourly rate.

This woman's story is not an exception. More people are going to be trapped in a system that extends conditionality and sanctions into low paid work.

No doubt many people think it sounds like a good idea to simplify the system by bringing multiple benefits together. Some people think if the benefit goes wrong, it simply needs to be paused and fixed.

But UC is really about forcing people into taking whatever work is available.

It is essentially coercion and cuts disguised as efficiency and fairness. It should be scrapped.

June Jones  
Kirklees



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Conditions are dangerous inside 'grisly Risley' prison

THERE HAVE been reports that an explosive device was found inside HM Prison Risley last week.

Since then I've been trying to get in contact with the prison because my partner is in there, but I'm just receiving a wall of silence.

At the moment the prison is on a restricted regime. Prisoners are locked up for at least 18 hours a day.

They're so short-staffed in Risley. There's four prison officers per wing, which is nowhere near enough. All they can do is the bare minimum.

Once a fortnight my partner has no work on Friday, and there's no work on the weekend. That means he'd have three days of being

locked up for 22 hours a day. If there's a bank holiday then it could be four days solid. Prison work should be all day, but it's just half a day.

On the wing that my partner is on there's no prisoner request forms.

That effectively means nobody can complain about anything—such as the fact that they're locked up for three quarters of the day.

The situation is leaving prisoners feeling desperate and hopeless.

The prison had a reputation for being "grisly Risley" in the 1980s and early 1990s. It seems to have gone back to that now.

In prisons across Britain

violence is soaring, self-harm is soaring, suicides are soaring, attacks on officers are soaring.

I've been anticipating protests in the prison. But now I'm scared that it's going to escalate even more.

I don't understand how an explosive device could have got inside the prison. But if you lock someone up with nothing constructive to do, they're going to feel like they're bursting.

That's what the bomb may have been—just an expression of someone wanting to burst.

I'm scared that things are going to turn nasty there.

Adam Baxter  
Liverpool

## Minimum drink pricing is just mean spirited

THE SUPREME Court has waved through Scottish government plans to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol.

It's a measure that seems to have the best intentions—and it's angered the giants of the drinks industry.

But is it the answer to problem drinking?

Researchers say it will save lives, but it's impossible to predict exactly how it will play out.

People struggling to pay the bills may have to forgo yet another hard-earned

pleasure. Yet it's difficult to see how a minimum price alone will help dependent drinkers.

Alcohol dependency services have been ruthlessly cut. Without that support the addicted will find a way to pay, perhaps turning to crime or to other substances.

Tinkering with price tags cannot address the root causes that drive people to drink. To do that, of course, costs money.

Phil Mellows  
Brighton

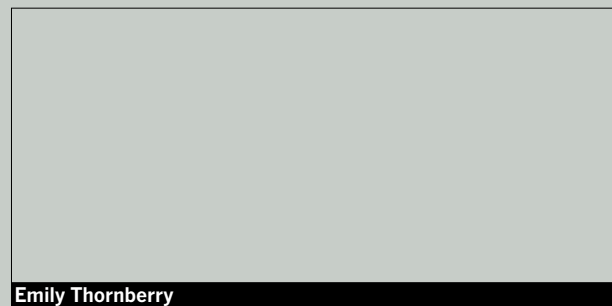
## Labour's promise to Israel is worrying

I WAS worried to read an interview with Labour's shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry on the right wing website Times of Israel last week.

The most worrying thing was that she said Britain's relationship with Israel would "remain strong" if a Corbyn-led government was elected.

She even said that the current government's policy towards Israel is "entirely in line" with Labour's.

Thornberry—supposedly an ally of Jeremy Corbyn—said this



Emily Thornberry

includes recognising a Palestinian state.

Yet when it comes down to it, Britain always supports Israel in its wars and violence against the Palestinians. The left is

under pressure not to speak up on this.

Thornberry has shown us what giving in to that pressure could mean.

Sharon Cooke  
Bournemouth

Just a thought...

## Be ready to say no to war

THE WORLD may be on the brink of war. There are flashpoints in the Middle East and Asia.

People must mobilise on a mass basis to say no war.

Nigel Norman  
East London

## We don't want new reactors

BARROW MP John Woodcock wants the government to help pay for new nuclear reactors on green fields next to Sellafield.

But nuclear power isn't the answer to anything—unless the question is "how can we maintain Trident".

Marianne Birkby  
On Facebook

## A new society to save planet

YOU ASK what kind of society can solve the climate crisis (Socialist Worker, 15 November).

Only a society that has given up greed for common sense.

@Annie\_Centeno  
On Twitter

## Now for the coups at ten

INSTEAD OF the usual presenter, an army general appeared on Zimbabwe's state TV news. He said the military had taken over the programme as a stand against the "social and economic suffering" inflicted on the poor.

Is it now only a matter of time before Fiona Bruce is abruptly replaced by a camouflaged British general on the BBC's six o'clock news?

Howard Henry Smith  
Penarth

## Blame greed for Grenfell

I WATCHED your interviews with Grenfell survivors (Socialist Worker online [bit.ly/2jytatp](http://bit.ly/2jytatp)).

This Tory government doesn't care about them, only money for the rich.

gbjanuary  
On YouTube

●THIS TRAGEDY shows capitalism is really evil. It only offers happiness for a top few and a hell for the majority.

The Philosophy of Tool  
On YouTube



## WHAT'S GOING ON?



The GOVERNMENT is trying to push its European Union (EU) Withdrawal Bill through parliament. MPs have submitted hundreds of amendments on everything from animal welfare to Northern Ireland.

Some Tory MPs have already voted with the opposition, and the government risks losing substantive votes.

The bill is so contested partly because it is so broad. It will essentially establish in detail what post-Brexit Britain will look like.

The bill will replace four decades of European rules and references to European institutions

in British law. It would come into force on the day Britain leaves the EU, tearing up swathes of the statute book in one fell swoop.

But it's also a lightning rod for every ongoing row about Brexit. Theresa May has tried to attach a firm deadline for Brexit—11pm, 29 March 2019.

This is intended to show EU negotiators that Britain's government is prepared to walk away if it doesn't get the deal it wants from the EU.

It's also a signal to Leave voters that the Tories can be trusted to see Brexit through—and to pro-EU MPs that they need to get in line.



Taking a slice out of the EU

## WHAT'S IT TO DO WITH HENRY VIII?



THE BILL would let the government rewrite chunks of legislation without consulting parliament. This severely undermines the limited democratic accountability that parliament provides.

It's been called the Henry VIII powers after the 1539 Proclamation Act that allowed the king to rule largely by decree.

The government argues that this is simply a practical necessity, because the legislative changes are too complex to put before parliament in full.

There are currently 12,000 EU regulations in force in Britain, 7,900 statutory instruments implementing EU legislation and 186 acts influenced by the EU.

There are also more than 80,000 EU agreements, treaties, court rulings and other documents.

All need changing. The bill was originally to be called the Great Repeal Bill.

The plan was to copy all the EU rules into British law for future parliaments to keep or change as they saw fit. But many of these

rules won't make sense without the treaties or EU institutions they refer to.

So they have to be rewritten.

The EU is no friend of working class people.

But like all neoliberal organisations it has some regulations that promise to protect things such as refugees' rights or workplace safety.

Contrary to Theresa May's promise last year, the Henry VIII powers mean that the Tories could sabotage these regulations.

## WHY ARE THE TORIES SPLIT?



THE TORIES are straining to put on a show of unity, with cabinet ministers last week insisting they welcomed MPs' criticisms of the bill.

But tempers in parliament ran high. Former attorney general Dominic Grieve called May's Brexit deadline "mad".

Backbench Brexiteer Bernard Jenkins said it "rumbles those who have not really accepted that we're leaving the European Union". Former business secretary Anna Soubry called him a "disgrace".

Brexit is the defining issue for May's government, and some Tories want that government to fail.

Many are seething over May's election debacle, the failure of austerity to relaunch the economy or from the wounds of previous faction fights. But there's also a real obstacle to the Tories uniting over Brexit. Trying to stay in office pulls them in two opposite directions.

They have to show that they can rule in the interest of business—which wants as little change from the EU status quo as possible. And they also seek to win votes and divide people by whipping up racism.

This quandary weakens them—and should be an opportunity for the left to go on the offensive.



Gove and Boris—off with their heads



Another great Theresa May Production

# THE TORIES' BREXIT CARRY ON

The big cheeses in the Tory party are in a pickle over their EU Withdrawal Bill. But what's the fuss about—and what would the bill mean for workers and migrants? Dave Sewell investigates

## WHAT DO BOSSES WANT, AND SHOULD WE CARE?



MOST OF big business in Britain opposed Brexit and now wants to limit its effects. Bosses don't want to let the small matter of democracy get in the way of making profit.

Many businesses operate on a transnational scale. They benefit from the EU ensuring they don't have to pay border tariffs or juggle different sets of regulations in different countries.

A no-deal Brexit would see the return of tariffs—taxes on

goods crossing borders. Some bosses are scaremongering about the effect this would have, not always convincingly.

Car manufacturers say that they couldn't adapt to a no-deal Brexit—but then claim they could adapt to pulling their firms out of Britain.

Their whining is a bid to get promises of some free public money, like Nissan did last year.

The financial sector in the City of London is lobbying for its own special trade deal with the

EU. It fears losing out to other European stock markets.

But the biggest prize for the bosses would be keeping the EU single market in some form.

It's a set of rules that uphold Europe-wide capitalist competition by banning anything that could impede it.

The European single market has been used to thwart trade unions' attempts to uphold collective pay bargaining, and to enforce a wave of cuts, privatisation and deregulation.

Many union leaders have been quick to echo the bosses' line that losing the single market would mean losing jobs in Britain.

They should know better. This has always been bosses' first response to any policy that restricts their profiteering, from banning child labour to bringing in a minimum wage.

But workers and bosses do not have a common interest. Workers could benefit from leaving the single market.

## WHAT'S LABOUR'S POSITION?



LABOUR IS as split over Brexit as the Tories. Its leadership has tried to chart a course that doesn't block Brexit now but leaves the door open to doing so in future.

But this is under attack from both sides. A minority of Labour MPs campaigned for Brexit while a much larger number want to limit it as much as possible.

Some 19 MPs defied the Labour whip last week to vote against repealing the 1972 European Communities Act, for example.

Rightly, Labour firmly opposes the Henry VIII powers.

Shadow Brexit secretary Keir

Starmer says it will also oppose the "gimmick" of a deadline for Brexit.

This fits with Labour's emphasis on making sure there's a "good" deal with the EU—and not planning for what happens when the EU refuses.

So does shadow chancellor John McDonnell's opposition to putting money aside to cope with a no-deal Brexit.

But Labour's idea of what constitutes a good deal is wrong on both of the two biggest issues.

It wants to stay in the bosses' neoliberal single market but ditch its one positive aspect, freedom of movement for EU citizens.



Keir Starmer—against 'gimmicks'



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR MIGRANTS?

THE BILL doesn't deal with immigration law explicitly. But Britain's immigration law is tied up in EU rules, so much of it would have to be rewritten.

It could stay substantially the same. Or it could be changed to give more rights to migrants from outside the EU, something the EU cruelly restricts.

But the Tories have made clear that they aim to restrict the rights of migrants from EU countries, and the bill helps them

do that. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants campaign has warned that immigration rules could be "unilaterally modified" to suit a new trade deal. Or the Henry VIII powers could be used to undermine migrants' rights.

Both the Tories and Labour plan to end the free movement of workers from EU countries.

Bosses rely on EU workers so the Tories have to be careful of slashing their numbers. But they can impose harsh laws that make migrants' lives harder.

Claims that this would protect conditions for the rest of the working class in Britain are cynical lies.

If bosses get away with attacks on some workers, they will be more confident to go after others.

Most unions rightly agree on defending the rights of EU migrants already in Britain. It's also TUC policy to defend free movement.

Labour should use debates about the bill to make that happen.

## IS IT A CHANCE TO STOP BREXIT?



SOME OF the debate is about creating the possibility to stop Brexit.

For example, any eventual deal with the EU could be made subject to a second referendum or have conditions imposed on it.

Some feel that staying in the EU would hold back Tory attacks and put anti-migrant racists on the back foot.

But the reasons to leave the EU are as strong now as they were last year. The

EU is a neoliberal bosses' club, an undemocratic bully—and an imperialist power bloc. That's why the bosses overwhelmingly back it—and why the vote to leave sent shockwaves through the establishment.

Just last week the EU announced a new pact to increase military spending and launch joint military operations abroad.

Meanwhile United Nations human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein denounced as "inhuman"

the EU's programme of returning refugees to "horrific" prisons in Libya.

Propping up the rotten EU is a dead end. But the Tories must not be given a free hand on deciding what form Brexit takes.

They should be fought on every issue, from safety regulations to migrants' rights.

However ordinary people voted in the EU referendum, we now need to unite and fight for a workers' Brexit.



EU soldier



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

### LONDON:HACKNEY

#### Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights

Book launch with author Judith Orr  
Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner  
Lower Clapton Rd),  
E5 0PU

### LONDON:HARINGEY

#### Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd  
(corner Vincent Rd),  
N15 3QH

### LONDON:WALTHAM FOREST

#### Abortion Wars—the Fight for Reproductive Rights

Book launch with author Judith Orr  
Wed 13 Dec, 7.30pm,  
William Morris  
Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
E17 6QQ

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### ABERDEEN

#### How do we end oppression?

Wed 29 Nov, 6pm,  
Belmont Cinema Cafe,  
49 Belmont St,  
AB10 1JS

### BOLTON

#### Tories in crisis—why does Brexit matter?

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off  
Bradshawgate),  
BL1 1DY

### BRADFORD

#### Why we oppose border controls

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane,  
BD5 0BQ

### BRIGHTON

#### 100 years on—why do we celebrate the Russian Revolution?

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St,  
BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL

#### Myanmar and the Rohingya—the bloody price of Islamophobia

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

### CARDIFF

#### Let's shake the magic money tree—the fight against austerity

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

The Women's March in London earlier this year

# Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation

### BARNLEY

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
YMCA,  
Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

### EXETER

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Exeter Community Centre,  
17 St. Davids Hill,  
EX4 3RG

### ROTHERHAM

Wed 20 Dec, 7pm,  
Talbot Lane Methodist  
Church Centre,  
Moorgate St, S60 2EY

### SWANSEA

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community Centre,  
St Albans Rd,  
SA20BP

### CHESTERFIELD

#### The rise of the far right—how can it be resisted?

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

### DUDLEY

#### 70 years since the partition of India—what is the legacy for today?

Wed 29 Nov, 8pm,  
The What Centre,  
23 Coventry St,  
Stourbridge,  
DY8 1EP

### EDINBURGH

#### What is 'cultural appropriation'?

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

### GLASGOW

#### Red Rosa—the life of revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Avant Garde,  
33-44 King St,  
G1 5QT

### HUDDERSFIELD

#### Why are strikes so important?

Wed 29 Nov, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade,  
HD1 5JP

### LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

#### 100 years after the Russian Revolution—why is Lenin still relevant today?

Thu 7 Dec, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

### LIVERPOOL

#### 100 years after the Balfour Declaration—how can Palestine be free?

Tue 5 Dec, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
22 School Ln,  
L1 3BT

### LONDON:CENTRAL

#### The refugees crisis—why we oppose all border controls

Thu 30 Nov, 6.15pm,  
Learning Hub Room 2,  
UCL South Quadrangle  
Malet Place,  
WC1E 6BT

### LONDON:ISLINGTON

#### The rise of the far right—how can it be resisted?

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St,  
N7 6QT

### LONDON:LEWISHAM

#### 50 years after the Abortion Act—why we still defend a woman's right to choose

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community  
and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd  
(near Greenwich train and  
DLR station), SE10 8JA

### LONDON:TOWER HAMLETS

#### The Bolsheviks and 1917

Wed 29 Nov, 7pm,  
Oxford House, Derbyshire St  
(opposite Bethnal Green Rd  
Tesco), E2 6HG

### LONDON:WALTHAM FOREST

#### A Rebel's Guide to Gramsci

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
William Morris  
Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
E17 6QQ

### MANCHESTER:CENTRAL

#### Genocide in Myanmar—why is it happening?

Wed 29 Nov, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

### NEWCASTLE

#### From Malcolm X to Black Lives Matter—the struggle against racism in the US

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
The Journey Cafe, (near  
Newcastle central library),  
New Bridge St W,  
NE1 8AN

### NORWICH

#### The crisis in Venezuela

Thu 30 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### OXFORD

#### The rise of the far right—how can it be resisted?

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way (off  
Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

### PORTSMOUTH

#### Does Venezuela show that socialism can't work?

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown  
Community Centre,  
River's St, PO5 4EZ

### SHEFFIELD:CITY CENTRE

#### Why are strikes so important?

Thu 30 Nov, 7pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible  
Theatre), S1 2JB

### WOLVERHAMPTON

### AND WALSALL

#### 100 years since the Balfour Declaration—how can Palestine be free?

Wed 29 Nov, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St, WV1 4HW

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### DORCHESTER

#### Sexism and the system—the fight for women's liberation

Sat 2 Dec, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,  
Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ.  
Organised by Dorset Socialists

## { STAND UP TO RACISM }

### SOUTH LONDON

#### Challenging Islamophobia in Britain today

Wed 29 Nov, 7pm,  
Brixton Library,  
Windrush Square,  
SW2 1EF.  
Speakers: Nahella Ashraf  
Saleha Jaffar, Lubaba Khalid,  
Lucy Masoud, Naima Omar

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } APPEAL EVENTS

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#### Socialist History Walk

Sun 26 Nov, 11am,  
Meet at Mile End station,  
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Come along and enjoy a walk around Bow, east London, to find out about its inspiring history. Tickets £5 or £3 concessions Ring 07960 349290 to book

### LONDON:WEST AND

### NORTHWEST

#### Appeal gig

Fri 8 Dec, 7pm until late  
Ochard Cafe,  
Singapore Rd, W13 0EP

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# Murder, intrigue and politics make Peaky Blinders great

Hit series gets its dramatic power from looking at world events. It doesn't sugar-coat politics and it takes its audience seriously, argues **Hope Ryan**

**PEAKY BLINDERS** tells the story of a working class-turned-gangster family from Small Heath, Birmingham.

The Shelby family's navigation through a gangster world left us at the end of season three with the majority of them facing death by hanging.

You get a sense of the murky dealings at the top of the state—royals and politicians are implicated in shady schemes.

The premier of season four thrusts us into a world of horror, brutality and political upheaval—an exaggerated but engaging portrayal of working class life in the 1920s.

It follows gangster Thomas Shelby who is a bundle of contradictions.

We're often reminded that despite his thuggery he holds on to the memory of his working class upbringing. But he also owns multiple factories and has business interests.

## Observations

Despite the dramatisation, the series is peppered with accurate historical observations.

Peaky Blinders was a term used to describe real gangs operating in Birmingham at the time.

This is arguably the most politicised popular drama on the BBC at the moment. The backdrop for the action is formed from the movements of the day.

Strikers, scabs, Bolsheviks and Irish republicans all get a look in. This political backdrop gives the series its sense of urgency.

You get a sense that world events are shaping the lives of people in one of the epicentres of the industrial revolution.

The series is built around personalities and localities, but never feels parochial.

Another strength are the female characters.

A new character is a woman, communist union rep who demands equal pay—something that still hasn't been achieved in modern day Britain.

Peaky Blinders is possibly the only television program that displays so vividly the harsh reality of working class life in early twentieth century Britain.



'I'M MAD as hell!'—Brian Cranston takes on the iconic role

PICTURE: JAN VERSWEYELD

## Tune in to Network for two hours of rage

### THEATRE

#### NETWORK

Network runs at the National Theatre's Lyttelton Theatre until March 24. Adapted by Lee Hall

**NETWORK IS** about an ageing news anchor getting mad.

Told he is being given the sack, Howard Beale calmly announces during the ensuing broadcast that he intends to kill himself on air.

Cue mayhem.

He becomes a sensation. Calling the news "bullshit" on the news is a hit.

"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!" is his heartfelt cry.

Lee Hall's stage adaptation of Paddy Chayefsky's 1976 movie satire on American TV is affectionate and powerful. The director, Ivo van Hove, creates a world of constantly roving cameras, shine and noise.

Everywhere here is motion, confusion, distraction.

It can be hard to know where to look, and that's the point—this is a merciless vision of the way media fragments our attention.

The fragmented stage, the

music and audience members paying extra to eat on stage all add to the mix. This and the *Spinal Tap* "turn the lights up on the audience" moment poke at the comfort of the comfortable theatre goer. But perhaps not enough.

How does anything get a hearing in the crowded fragmented noise of the media? Is it by speaking truth by being louder, or simply sensational?

Is Beale a threat to, or an opportunity for, the establishment? When his anger turns to Arab money taking over the US, who gains?

### Dazzling

For all this to work it needs a powerful centre. Bryan Cranston's performance is dazzling.

He's powerful, intriguing and becomes the focus for an alternative—for the real and fictional audience—despite the machinations of the Network.

Cranston's performance perhaps focuses on the "I'm a human being, goddammit. My life has value" part of the character. And it is no bad thing for that.

Michelle Dockery as Diana

gives an impressive performance battling against the everyday stereotypes—of film and play—of a promotion-hungry woman looking for affairs with older bosses. Douglas Henshall is also good as Max Schumacher, who is Beale's best friend and boss. Their sub plot is a pointedly cliched counterweight to the main narrative.

When the contemporary notes in the production are hints they work.

When they are overt, such as the daft post-ovation US presidential clips, they help the audience back into their comfort zone.

The production downplays the film's exploitation of a terrorist atrocity as a ratings opportunity, which doesn't help the climax make sense.

The production may be a bit less radical than it thinks it is—but it's a genuinely fine piece of theatre with brilliant outstanding performances.

**Simon Basketter**

The play is sold out but there are tickets available through the theatre's Day Seats and Friday Rush services. Go to [bit.ly/2AUOWfz](http://bit.ly/2AUOWfz) and [bit.ly/2zLkuGx](http://bit.ly/2zLkuGx)

## BOOK TOUR

### THE LIFE AND RHYMES OF BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

by Benjamin Zephaniah  
On tour from 6 May  
Tickets from £22, available from venues

THE "PEOPLE'S laureate" Benjamin Zephaniah is taking his autobiography on tour this spring.

"I wrote my autobiography gradually, over six years, and wanted it to be a social history of Britain," said Zephaniah.

"They say you're



Benjamin Zephaniah

supposed to mellow with age—but I haven't. If anything, I just seem to be getting more militant."

## DEATH METAL

### #TORYCORE

27 November at  
The Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Road, London, NW1 8EH.  
Tickets from £3.  
Go to [roundhouse.org.uk](http://roundhouse.org.uk)

A THEATRICAL death metal night promises a "rage-filled response to the government, influenced by Napalm Death, Slayer and Nina Simone."

## TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- 1 **Abortion wars**  
Judith Orr
- 2 **Memphis 68—the tragedy of southern soul**  
Stuart Cosgrove
- 3 **A reader's guide to Marx's Capital**  
Joseph Choonara
- 4 **Marx, Capital and the madness of economic reason**  
David Harvey
- 5 **A rebel's guide to Rosa Luxemburg**  
Sally Campbell

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Cillian Murphy as gangster Thomas Shelby



**R**USSIA IS back as the bogey-man of liberal politics. At the height of the Cold War in the 1960s the myth was that Russian tanks were minutes away from rolling into Western Europe.

Today it's that president Vladimir Putin's online army of Twitter bots and hackers has already penetrated Western defences.

According to Theresa May, Putin is waging a war by "weaponising information to sow discord in the West and undermine our institutions". Her charge sheet included "planting fake stories and photo-shopped images", "meddling in elections" and "fomenting conflict".

And the Guardian newspaper lapped it up. That's because it sees Russia's hand behind almost every major upset—from Donald Trump's election to the vote to leave the European Union (EU).

May claimed, "I have a very simple message for Russia—we know what you are doing."

In reality no one apart from the Russian state itself knows the details of what it's doing.

But every imperialist power has weaponised information and tried to influence voting, not least the US and Britain who are now crying foul over Putin.

"Intelligence" chiefs boast of their ability to snoop on people online. And the US CIA spy agency has a long history of interfering in elections and destabilising governments across the world—sometimes through dirty money, sometimes through coups.

### Corrupt

In 1996 the US pumped money into the Russian presidential election. It looked like the corrupt incumbent Boris Yeltsin would lose to a Stalinist challenger.

Yeltsin had implemented brutal austerity and free market reforms and languished at 8 percent in the polls.

The US pushed the International Monetary Fund to give Yeltsin a £6.5 billion lifeline—money that was unavailable weeks before. Unpaid wages were paid. Votes were bought. The result was a resounding win for the West's favoured candidate.

Creating "fake news" is not unique to Russia either.

After the 2003 invasion of Iraq the US military struck a £412 million deal with disgraced British PR agency Bell Pottinger.

There were plenty of real jihadists and real jihadist videos in Iraq. But Bell Pottinger also made and distributed fake Al Qaida videos, which told Western military forces the IP addresses of those who viewed them.

It's certainly likely that the Russian state is using online



RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin

# DOES PUTIN PULL THE STRINGS?

Politicians and commentators seem to think anything that goes wrong can be blamed on Russian Twitter spybots. But the truth is scarier still, warns Tomáš Tengely-Evans



Assassinated reporter Anna Politkovskaya

propaganda to influence politics in the West too.

And Putin has shown himself to be ruthless when going after potential threats—inside and outside of Russia.

Both the journalist Anna Politkovskaya and the former spook Alexander Litvinenko were murdered in the space of three months in 2006.

Politkovskaya, who bravely reported on Russia's brutal war on Chechnya, was shot dead by a hit squad at her Moscow flat.

“Every imperialist state has ‘weaponised information’

to grandstand over Putin so she can pretend that her new “global Britain” is taking on a global threat.

Similarly former First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas, said Britain is “locked in a daily confrontation” with Russia.

It's true that Russian submarines and planes are now more frequently found in the seas and sky around Britain. Again, that's hardly unique—Britain and its allies try to project their military might all over the globe.

But for the top brass it's a chance to lobby for more cash.

Zambellas made his comments in a hearing of the House of Commons defence select committee last week. He said the Armed Forces were “close to breaking point”—and pleaded for more funding.

The military lobbying is backed up by newspapers such as the Daily Telegraph and Daily Mail, which cling onto delusions of British imperial grandeur.

The Sun has used Russian submarine patrols in the North Sea as a way to show its support for Trident nuclear weapons, in contrast to supposed Putin-apologist Jeremy Corbyn.

It's also in liberals' interests to talk up the role of Russian propaganda.

But Russian meddling doesn't mean that there aren't real social forces driving political events such as Brexit or the election of Donald Trump.

**T**HE liberal capitalist order is cracking up. And liberals are blaming everyone—apart from themselves.

Attacking Russian propaganda avoids having to ask why the “centre ground” is failing, why people are angry and why they're looking for alternatives.

And it fits with a patronising view of working class people. Could they really make an informed decision to vote to leave the EU? No, it must be the Russians.

Similarly Democrat Hillary Clinton blames her presidential defeat on “Russian fake news”, not her record of supporting wars and neoliberalism.

And now the Democrats have no intention of dealing with the social crisis that led to Trump's election. They hope to bring Trump down by focusing on links between members of his campaign team and Russia.

This really could spell the end for Trump—because beneath his opportunism lie real imperialist rivalries.

As the Russian revolutionary socialist Vladimir Lenin argued in 1917, capitalism has grown into a world system of competing imperialist states.

“The capitalists partition the world not out of personal malice,” he wrote. “The degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to

get profits.” This sort of imperialist rivalry was at the heart of the West and Russia's clash over Ukraine in 2014.

Russia was trying to build a Eurasian Customs Union trading bloc from the countries that used to be part of Stalinist Russia's empire. It partly wanted to stop China's growing influence in central Asian republics.

As one of the most industrially developed, Ukraine is a key link in Russia's plans. This brought it into conflict with the US and EU who were furthering their own interests in eastern Europe.

Fearing Ukraine could go fully into the EU's orbit after a political crisis in 2014, Russia sought to destabilise it by supporting separatists in the south east of the country.

And it seized Crimea, the region where it leased a port for its Black Sea Fleet.

But this is not a return to the Cold War with the US and Russia competing for dominance as the world's two imperialist superpowers.

### Control

After the Cold War, Russia's economy and military collapsed. Since then Russia's aim has been to regain control over states that used to be part of the Soviet empire—what it calls its “near abroad”.

For a time, high oil prices let Putin's Russia flex its muscles more and pour money into the military.

But internationally its approach is much more targeted than that of Stalinist Russia, and this summer it also announced big military spending cuts.

Russia has been bombing Syria to prop up dictator Bashar al-Assad.

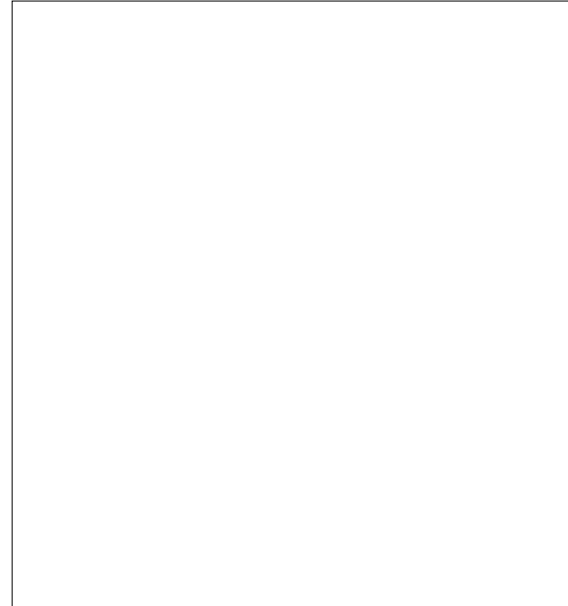
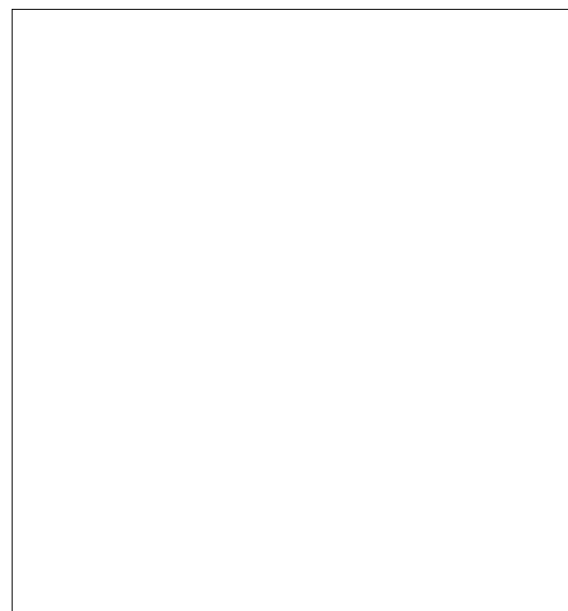
His regime is a long-standing ally of Russia in the Middle East.

If Assad had fallen Russia would have lost its major naval military base in Tartus, Syria, which gives it a port on the Mediterranean.

Without Tartus it would have to rely on the goodwill of the Turkish government which controls the narrow straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Russian capitalism has large financial interests in the Mediterranean, particularly in Cyprus near the new gas fields of the East Mediterranean.

Meanwhile the EU is building a “Southern Gas Corridor” from central Asia to the



British frigate confronts Russian sub in 2016 (top), Former US president Bill Clinton and former Russian president Boris Yeltsin whose election he bought (above)

Mediterranean to break its dependency on Russian energy.

So muscling in on the Mediterranean will be decisive for Russian economic growth and projecting its imperialist interests in the future. And this rubs up against other imperialist powers such as the US and Britain.

Rivalries like this are where the real danger lies.

For all our rulers' posturing over the Russian threat, it's imperialism that threatens to create deadly confrontations.

To remove the threat means getting rid of the system of competing capitalist states—and that starts with trying to get rid of our own hypocritical rulers.



Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad

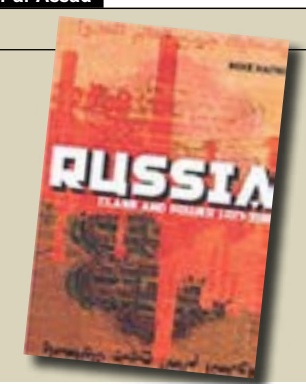
## READ MORE

● **Ukraine crisis and the two imperialisms** by Alex Callinicos Socialist Worker online [bit.ly/2A8X9zq](http://bit.ly/2A8X9zq)

● **Imperialism's game of empires** Socialist Worker online [bit.ly/2zKt4AI](http://bit.ly/2zKt4AI)

● **Russia: Class and Power 1917-2000** by Mike Haynes £12

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## Workers needed to seize power in 1917 or risk defeat

Some critics argue that the Russian Revolution was ‘premature’—but there was no time to lose



A POSTER from the Hungarian Soviet Republic 1919

### 1917 TIMELINE

**18 November (1 December in the modern calendar)**

- Army chief Dukhonin is sacked for not respecting the armistice
- He organises loyal soldiers to attack the Soviet government
- They are defeated three days later by Red Guards

international context.

Capitalism was booming in cities such as Petrograd and because of this a minority of the population—workers—could bring the economy grinding to a halt.

While the Russian working class was small, its social weight and potential power was disproportionate to its size.

But its size also meant that the working class needed the much larger peasantry, to carry through the revolution.

Hope of an international response to the Russian Revolution wasn't a pipe dream. Across the world there were movements, including the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland and the 1918 Kiel

“There weren't parties like the Bolsheviks who could give leadership

sailors mutiny in Germany.

Communists and Socialists were heading up the Hungarian Soviet Republic.

The revolutionary wave spread across Germany—and forced the Kaiser to abdicate and his empire out of the war.

In Ireland, Germany and other countries there were conditions for revolution.

### Crucially

But crucially there weren't revolutionary socialist parties, like the Bolsheviks, that could give leadership to the working class.

This didn't make their failure inevitable.

By setting up the Third International, to bring together revolutionaries from across the world, the Bolsheviks managed to tear away workers away from the social democratic parties. From France to Germany hundreds of thousands joined the newly established Communist Parties.

And the revolutionary wave didn't disappear in 1919. In Germany, a general strike defeated a military coup attempt in 1920 and showed the potential power of the working class.

Even as the revolutionary wave in Europe subsided, the Bolsheviks looked to people in its colonies as allies against imperialism.

Those who dare don't always win. But those revolutionaries who don't dare are doomed to disappointment and surrendering their principles to capitalism.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution [tinyurl.com/sw1917](http://tinyurl.com/sw1917)



# Labour MP: left are ‘uncouth, unsanitary’

by NICK CLARK

**A BBC documentary about Labour’s general election campaign that aired on Monday embarrassed Labour’s right wing MPs.**

Labour—the Summer that Changed Everything followed MPs Stephen Kinnock, Ruth Cadbury, Sarah Champion and Lucy Powell during the campaign.

It captured their pessimism and disdain for Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters throughout the election campaign—and their bewilderment as the results came in.

Yet on the same night that the documentary aired, right wing Labour factions met in parliament—and showed they had learned nothing.

## Moderate

MPs and supporters gathered for a “moderate meetup” organised by the right wing Labour First and Progress—a place to rally the right against the left.

They showed the same naked contempt for party members. John Spellar MP said new Labour members

encouraged to join by Corbyn “can be very destructive”.

He suggested they were joining “not with the party’s best interests at heart”.

And he described left wing party activists as “unpleasant, uncouth and sometimes very unsanitary”.

**JOHN SPELLAR MP—says left activists are ‘sometimes very unsanitary’**

The right still believes that Labour can only succeed with right wing politics—despite the general election result.

MPs and activists repeated the simplistic and patronising view that working class people are all right wing.

Sedgefield MP Phil Wilson

implied that most people in County Durham who are “majority white British” aren’t inspired by left wing Labour.

Labour First chair and key right wing fixer Luke Akehurst said working class people “haven’t got the time

to fantasise about socialism”.

He said someone could only be interested in fighting for a better society “if you are a middle class thrill seeker and all you know about socialism is what you read in books and what you’ve seen in a Ken Loach film”.

Akehurst wants right wing candidates to fight and beat the left in upcoming elections to Labour’s ruling NEC.

He also said that some big trade unions, such as Unison and GMB, don’t support Corbyn and are fighting their own left wing members.

He said Unison general secretary Dave Prentis “is not perfect politically.

“But the alternative to him inside Unison is the Socialist Workers Party, and he’s having to fight them constantly”.

But Akehurst was hopeful because Corbyn “is 68. So there is likely to be another Labour leader in my lifetime.”

He added that some “soft left” Labour MPs had “spotted this”.

These included one from the “North London elite” and another “from a gritty

northern, trade union background”—believed by some to be references to Emily Thornberry and Angela Rayner.

Akehurst said if a Labour government was elected MPs would have to mostly follow Corbyn.

But they should rebel and support war and nuclear weapons as they “have a moral duty to veto anything that might damage national security”.

In the short term the right plans to force Corbyn to gradually shift rightwards.

## Rebel

Progress chair Alison McGovern MP said the right must force Labour into staying in the bosses’ single market after Brexit—and clamp down on immigration.

“I think we can take steps to manage the concerns of immigration within the existing rules of the single market,” she said.

Party activists may fight battles over internal elections.

But the real fight is to resist the pressure on the leadership to drift to the right.

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# Workers need a pay rise the budget won't deliver

As Philip Hammond gets ready to announce the budget, Sadie Robinson looks at how public sector wages have suffered under Tory austerity

**CHANCELLOR Philip Hammond** will likely claim that he's scrapped the 1 percent public sector pay cap when he delivers his budget this week.

It's a lie. The majority of public sector workers remain subject to the cap. And all still face real terms pay cuts, taking inflation into account.

Health workers, teachers, civil service staff and local government workers have had no new pay offer. Workers in further education were offered just 1 percent this year.

The government agreed a 1 percent pay deal for most teachers and school workers earlier this year. But this is at schools' discretion, so some won't even get that.

The NASUWT union said the average pay award for teachers last year was just 0.6 percent.

In the HMRC, civil service workers were offered an "average" 1 percent deal. Some received less based on "performance".

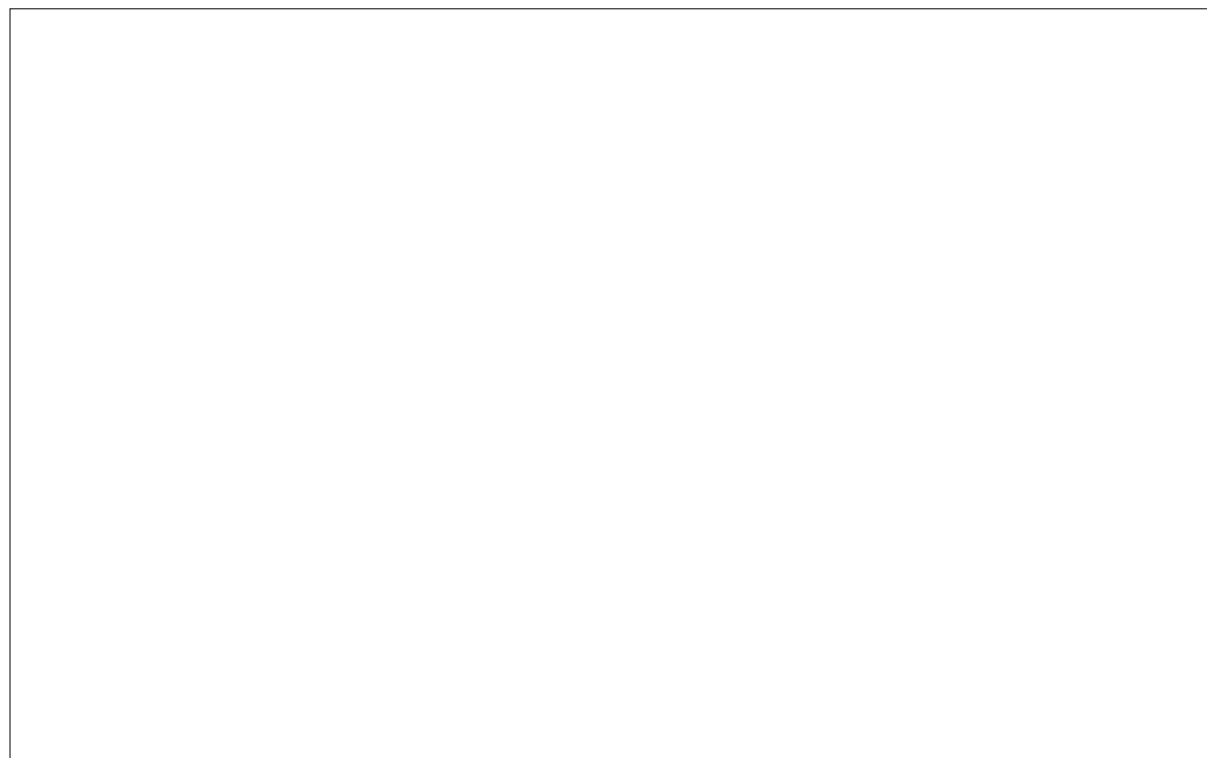
Typically earlier this year the Tories chose to give cops and prison officers "above the cap" rises of 2 percent and 1.7 percent.

Higher education workers received a 1.7 percent increase and firefighters were offered 2 percent.

Firefighters in the FBU union were right to reject that offer and demand more. A 2 percent rise is below inflation and doesn't make up for years of real terms cuts.

And the Tories aren't providing any extra money to fund higher pay, so any rises are snatched from already overstretched budgets.

TUC figures show that many public sector workers earn around £3,000 less a year in real terms today than they did seven years ago. Public sector pay has been slashed by



TORY CHANCELLOR Philip Hammond

## BACK STORY

**In 2010 the government imposed a two-year pay freeze on public sector workers**

- Since then governments have imposed a 1 percent pay cap
- Pay for public sector workers has fallen by 10 percent in real terms since 2010
- One in seven has skipped meals
- Unions demand bigger pay rises—and the money's there to fund it

10 percent in real terms since 2010. For the majority of NHS workers, the fall is 17 percent.

At September's TUC conference 13 unions agreed to demand a 5 percent pay rise. Unions say this would cost £9 billion. Fourteen health unions, including Unison, Unite and the GMB, wrote to the government soon after demanding a pay rise in line with inflation, 3.9 percent.

Some unions are beginning to ballot for strikes. There have been strong votes for action in two national consultative ballots. PCS union

members returned a 79 percent vote in favour of striking to beat the cap on a turnout of almost 49 percent.

The further education section of UCU voted by 75 percent to strike in a consultative ballot. UCU is set to ballot workers for strikes in some colleges. It also demanded an extra £800 to make up for some of the pay cut over the last seven years.

The government claims it can't afford the rises. The truth is that there's plenty of cash (see below)—but the Tories prefer to hand it to their fat cat mates.

## More are on the headline

**FOOD PRICES** rose at their fastest rate in four years last month. Food and non-alcoholic drinks cost 4 percent more in October than a year earlier, the Office for National Statistics said.

Vegetables cost 5.7 percent more and meat 3.9 percent more.



## Rich families get better off

**HOUSEHOLDS** on below-average incomes saw their housing costs rise by an average of £714 between 2007-08 and 2015-16, new figures showed last week.

Yet those on above average incomes paid an average of £271 less over the same period. And for the tenth richest households, housing costs fell by £1,206 on average.



# Prices rise while wages and bosses' taxes stay low

**TORY PAY** freezes and pay caps have had a disastrous impact on public sector workers. A recent poll commissioned by the TUC found that one in seven had skipped meals to make ends meet.

Over a fifth had left the heating off or pawned something, while half said they were worried about expenses. And nearly a quarter said they would be unable to pay an unexpected bill of £500.

And while pay and benefits are held down,

prices are rising. The official CPI measure of inflation rose to 2.9 percent in August from 2.6 percent in July.

The more realistic RPI figure, which takes housing costs and council tax into account, rose to 3.9 percent.

Meanwhile life is rosy for the rich. Britain has the lowest rate of corporation tax—the tax on bosses' profits—in the G20. The main rate is just 19 percent. It's set to drop to 17 percent

by 2020. In 2008 it was 30 percent and under Margaret Thatcher it was 52 percent.

In May the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) said that cuts announced between 2010 and 2016 would hand bosses £16.5 billion a year. "Changes to corporation tax have represented some of the largest giveaways in both parliaments since 2010," it said.

It said corporation tax was set to make up just 2.3 percent of

national income by 2021-22, compared to a "pre-recession high" of 3.2 percent.

Yet another IFS report last year showed that over 4 percent of national income came from corporation tax in the mid-1980s.

It said corporation tax as a share of national income had dropped "substantially" by around 25 percent since the start of the financial crash in 2007-08.

Yet the share of money

coming from indirect taxes that affect everyone, such as VAT, has gone up.

Disgracefully, the bosses are raking in such enormous profits that the actual amount of money raised from corporation tax is rising, despite the lower rate.

TUC research into the impact of the pay cap bit.ly/2AKS8sX What's been happening to corporation tax? ifs.org.uk/publications/9207 The changing composition of UK tax revenues ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/bns/BN\_182.pdf

## Nurses have to borrow to live

**ONE** in 20 nurses has been forced to take out a payday loan to cover living costs, the Royal College of Nursing revealed last week.

One in four has had to borrow money, and the same proportion have taken a second job.





## IN BRIEF

**Would wood staff like more pay? Yes!**

OVER 100 timber workers in Lincolnshire struck against a pay freeze on Wednesday of last week.

The GMB union members, who work at the Metsa Wood Timber Yard in Boston, have already staged an overtime ban for over a month.

Last year they won a modest pay increase—strikes can win more this year.

**School sick pay strike off for talks**

A PLANNED strike at Charlton Park Academy in south east London was suspended for talks last week.

GMB and NEU union members at the school are fighting worse sick pay arrangements for people on newer contracts.

They held two joint strikes against the attack earlier this month.

**Drought for draught drinkers on cards**

MORE THAN 100 lorry drivers and drivers' mates in Sheffield are voting on strikes over health and safety at Tradetam Ltd, a subsidiary of DHL.

The Unite union members accuse bosses of allocating routes that exceed their contracted hours and with loads above the agreed weight.

They deliver alcoholic drinks in Yorkshire, Humberside and the east Midlands. Unite warns a strike could trigger a Christmas "beer drought".

**Fujitsu workers to take protest to HQ**

PROTESTERS ARE set to demonstrate outside Fujitsu's UK headquarters in London.

Unite members are campaigning to save jobs and to defend the union against attempts to victimise reps.

On 5 December Fujitsu will reconvene the final redundancy hearing for Ian Allinson which was adjourned on 8 November.

Ian is one of several reps being unfairly targeted by the company.

●Protest Tuesday 5 December, 8.30am-10am, Fujitsu, 22 Baker Street, London W1U 3BW. For more information on the campaign see [bit.ly/2oYsHPv](http://bit.ly/2oYsHPv)

**Low pay? No tanks, say army trainers**

TANK-DRIVING instructors in Bovington, Dorset, were set to strike on Wednesday of this week in a dispute over pay.

The workers, who train soldiers in tank and armoured vehicle driving and maintenance, are members of the PCS union.

They voted by 81 percent, on a turnout of 61 percent, to strike after their bosses at the Babcock Armour Centre made a below-inflation pay offer of 2.4 percent.

## EDUCATION



HUNDREDS of students marched through central London last Wednesday on a demonstration for free education and against university cuts.

The march, called by the National Campaign against Fees and Cuts, called for living grants for all students.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## UNIVERSITIES

# Lecturers should vote for a pensions strike

by SADIE ROBINSON

UCU UNION members are likely to begin a ballot for strikes over pensions later this month.

The ballot would involve union members in older universities who are part of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

Bosses want to turn the defined benefit scheme into a defined contribution scheme—slashing the value of workers' pensions.

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt wrote to members last week. She said the proposal "would mean the effective end of USS as we know it".

"It is the worst proposal I have received in 20 years and we need to fight it," she said.

"There is no point pretending that anything other than sustained strike action with the aim of hugely disrupting (and not rescheduling) lectures and classes in the New Year will make the employers listen."

Nearly 87 percent of members said they would be prepared to strike to defend the scheme in a recent consultative ballot.

The turnout was nearly 56 percent—showing the potential to beat the new voting thresholds in the Tory Trade Union Act.

The mood is there to fight. UCU members need to go all out to build the biggest possible yes vote and turnout in the ballot and stop the bosses' attack.

## POSTAL WORKERS

## Strikes back on the cards at Royal Mail?

POSTAL WORKERS' union leaders have hinted that talks with bosses at Royal Mail could end with a major strike—originally planned for October this year—going ahead.

The CWU union and Royal Mail are in the middle of an "external mediation" process invoked by bosses to stop workers striking in defence of their pay, pensions and conditions.

Workers had been set to strike for two days in October before bosses were granted an injunction to stop them by the high court. An appointed external mediator was set to present a report including their recommended solutions to the dispute.

But in a letter to union

members last week the CWU described the talks as "difficult and protracted".

It said, "The next couple of weeks will be crucial to determine whether a final agreement can be reached". But it added, "This dispute is far from over".

It comes after Royal Mail's half year report revealed it had made profits of £77 million, and promised increased dividends to shareholders.

**Delivery**

Yet bosses are still intent on forcing through cuts to workers' pensions and salaries, as well as to its delivery model.

CWU members delivered a huge vote to

strike earlier this year.

Workers at a delivery office in St Helens, Merseyside, staged an unofficial walkout last Thursday after a worker was suspended.

Socialist Worker says there should be strikes unless there is a deal that:

●Guarantees a pension scheme for all workers in the industry, not just those who've worked there the longest

●Gives workers an above-inflation pay rise not linked to productivity deals

●Guarantees that workers aren't forced to change their hours to fit in with Royal Mail's profit drive

●Gives workers a shorter working week—without loss of pay

Nick Clark

## PRIVATE MAIL WORKERS

## Parcel workers demand bosses sort it out

WORKERS AT a parcel sorting hub in Hinkley, Leicestershire, protested last Thursday against their treatment by managers.

The Unite union members work for distribution firm DPD, and took their protest to its headquarters in Smethwick, Birmingham. They allege

bullying and late demands of compulsory overtime.

Workers have to ask permission to use the toilet.

They have to wait up to an hour to be searched at the end of the shift. Male security guards reportedly search female workers.



On the protest

PICTURE: UNITE COMMUNITY

## ANTI-FASCISM

## Fascist Robinson routed

FORMER English Defence League leader Tommy Robinson was forced to cancel a planned speech in Grimsby last week after being refused a venue.

Robinson is promoting his new book which disgracefully claims to explain "why Muslims kill for Islam".

Three venues in Grimsby cancelled the launch after an outcry from ordinary people. Robinson had to cancel a planned speech and presentation.

He was reduced to handing out copies of his book outside a pub.

He whined, "Everywhere

we go we get chased or attacked."

A previous book launch in Manchester was scuppered after the venue cancelled following "unprecedented opposition" and an anti-fascist protest.

Anti-racists gathered in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, last Saturday to protest against a planned fundraiser organised by anti-Islam group For Britain.

Former Ukip leadership candidate Anne Marie Waters launched the group earlier this year. But there was no sign of For Britain members.

## ANTI-RACISM

## Stand Up To Racism on the streets across Britain

>>>continued from page 20 linked to a call on Theresa May to take in at least the 3,000 child refugees who should have been admitted after the passing of the Dubs amendment.

Among the Islington initiatives are writing to all the trade unions in the borough asking for support. Labour Party members in Islington North and Islington South constituencies are raising the appeal at upcoming meetings.

Students from City University and Middlesex University have been in contact with their student unions and are planning SUTR appeal collections between now and the end of term.

Two drop off points for collections have been set up



in the borough. Birmingham activists also plan a fundraising meal.

Manchester SUTR has organised an event with Muslim Engagement and

Development (Mend) for the appeal. The Manchester Community Social and Solidarity Meal is being held on 30 November as part of Islamophobia Awareness Month and to raise money for the appeal.

●The SUTR delegation to Calais, organised with Care4Calais, takes place on 9 December. For full details and to donate go to [bit.ly/2yA5VpR](http://bit.ly/2yA5VpR)

●The Birmingham day of action is this Saturday outside Waterstones, 24-26 High Street, from 2pm-4pm

## OBITUARY

## Lois Hubbard 1929-2017

SOCIALISTS AND campaigners in Doncaster have lost a friend and comrade with the passing of Lois Hubbard.

Originally from London, Lois worked as a primary school teacher in two mining villages during the 1980s and 1990s. She was a stalwart in all the major campaigns in Doncaster.

Lois was for many years a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Doncaster, but left over political differences in 2010.

Lois combined a deep commitment to the struggle with a love of travel and foreign languages. In her eighties she worked in



Lois Hubbard

Sri Lanka as a teacher.

Back home in Doncaster she volunteered at the Quaker church, which every Thursday runs a full day session helping over 100 refugees in the town.

She always attended protests and campaign meetings—whether it was fighting cuts, supporting strikes or fighting for women's rights. We send our condolences to her children Lois, Rachel, Kaye, David, and Ben.

Doncaster SWP



## TRANSPORT

# Drivers shift fight over pay up a gear

by SARAH BATES

**BUS WORKERS** in the north west of England are escalating their fight after bosses made a “final offer” of just 1p an hour more than the previous offer.

Up to 2,000 bus drivers and engineers are set to strike on 4 and 7 December, from 12 to 14 December and again from 20 to 23 December.

Talks between Arriva North West bosses and the Unite and GMB unions broke down last Friday.

They struck this Monday as part of programme of action that’s seen them walk out every Monday during October and November.

## Angered

Unite member Ged, a bus driver at the Green Lane Stonecroft depot in Liverpool, said the latest offer had angered people.

“It is an insult and it is winding people up more than anything,” he told Socialist Worker.

“Usually 120 buses would have left the depot today, but not a single one has.”

He added, “Our strike is so solid that hopefully we’ll have more leverage next time we sit down to negotiate.”



WORKERS IN Bootle show their opposition to the new offer

PICTURE: UNITE

The workers are fighting to end pay differences across 11 Arriva North West depots and for a pay rise in line with inflation.

Bosses say that their latest offer is 2.6 percent rising to 3 percent after six months.

But the unions said it’s an “insulting” deal—and are demanding at least an additional 2p an hour. They are

both balloting their members next week on the new offer, with a strong recommendation to reject.

Unite regional organiser John Broughton told Socialist Worker the strikers were “resolute and firm in their conviction”.

“We’ve recommended rejecting this deal, but I don’t think we needed to because

there is so much anger out there,” he said. “They’re angry at the way Arriva North West is treating them.”

“We’re asking for an extra 2p an hour, which would make it about a 3.1 percent rise.

“And that doesn’t even keep up with inflation.”

Escalating strikes can force the bosses to pay up.

## RAIL WORKERS

# Workers at Cross Country walk out over work hours

**TRAIN MANAGERS** and senior conductors at the Arriva Cross Country rail company struck over shift patterns last Sunday.

The RMT union said that scab workers were offered £250 and luxury hotel accommodation.

But bosses were forced to admit the strike meant “a limited train service”.

A further five strikes are planned this month and next month, including on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

■ **RMT UNION** members on the Virgin West Coast line have returned a massive vote to walk out over pay. Almost 1,400 train

managers and on board catering, clerical and retail staff voted by 91 percent to strike on an 81 percent turnout. The route runs from Glasgow to London.

Virgin bosses offered drivers a 9 percent pay rise, but other train and station staff only 3.2 percent.

Some 400 TSSA union members on the West Coast line are also balloting for strikes, with the result expected on 28 November.

The unions are demanding a deal similar to the one offered to train drivers.

Alongside the pay rise, drivers got a one hour reduction in the working week and an additional £500 on top of their basic salary.

## FAST FOOD WORKERS

# McDonald’s workers plan to supersize their struggle

**BOSSSES** AT McDonald’s are targeting workers who staged the first ever strike at the fast food giant in Britain in September.

Bfawu union members walked out over pay and conditions at two stores—in Crayford, south east London, and Cambridge.

Shen from the Crayford store told Socialist Worker, “They’re calling people in for meetings without any evidence just to show that they can.”

“They’re trying to make us anxious.”

The workers are gearing up for strikes in the future and hope that more sites will join the dispute.

As workers get more organised, the bosses’ mask has slipped.

But Shen said, “It’s not working and people are joining the union.”

“We know we’re going to go out on strike again. Now it’s just a question of how many stores join us.”

Strikes, protests and campaigning can force poverty-paying bosses onto the back foot.

## HOUSING

# Grenfell campaign rejects police’s official death toll

**COPS SAY** 71 people died in the Grenfell Tower fire in west London. They released the official figure last week.

But the Justice4Grenfell campaign released its own figure. It says that at least 99 people died in the blaze last June.

A key argument is over undocumented migrants living in the tower block, and people who sublet their flats.

The Tories have been forced to offer permanent resident status for undocumented migrants who survived the fire.

But people have to jump through hoops to qualify. And the offer is only open to survivors, not people who have information about friends and relatives who

may have died in the fire.

And despite concessions from the Tories, people are understandably nervous about coming forward.

A full amnesty for all survivors and those with information is the only way the full truth can be established.

Some 2,000 people joined the latest silent march for Grenfell on Tuesday of last week—the largest one yet.

■ **Campaigners, tenants and residents** are to discuss the way forward for the housing movement after Grenfell at a summit this weekend.

● Saturday 25 November, 11am, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, WC1H 9BI. axethehousingtax.org.uk

## HARINGEY

# Left bins HDV councillors

**LEFT WINGERS** opposed to the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) have triumphed in the selection process for Labour council candidates in the north London borough.

The £2 billion regeneration scheme would see some 5,000 homes on seven estates demolished.

Key councillors who support the HDV were not reselected in some wards.

Alan Strickland, lead councillor for housing and one of the architects of the HDV, stood down after he lost the first stage of his reselection contest last week.

Emina Ibrahim, national vice chair of Labour left group Momentum, was shortlisted to contest the local elections in Strickland’s ward. Further successes came on Monday night in other wards. Haringey

Labour is set to put up a council slate with a majority opposed to the HDV.

Defeating the HDV would be a blow to developers and make councils think twice about embarking on similar projects. But winning the money for housing that’s needed will be a major fight.

The HDV campaign has organised meetings on estates and mobilised tenants—that must continue.

■ **LONDON** mayor Sadiq Khan has refused to launch a bid to buy the Holloway Prison site in Islington.

Some 5,000 people had signed a petition calling for the north London site to be used for council housing.

Labour-run Islington council’s cabinet member for housing Diarmaid Ward took to Twitter to shame Khan over his record on housing.

## HOUSING WORKERS

# Mears workers want more

**HOUSING** maintenance workers in Manchester are back on strike in the second round of their fight against unequal pay.

The 160 Unite union members at subcontractor Mears struck last week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday—a pattern they plan to repeat every week until mid-February.

They previously struck for 40 days earlier this year, but paused their action after 12 weeks to run a second strike ballot.

Unite rep Billy Sinclair told Socialist Worker, “We smashed the ballot second time round.”

Mears currently pays some workers up to £3,500 less than others for doing the same work.

Unite has accused bosses of “using their energies to

try to weaken the workers’ resolve by bullying younger workers.”

A survey by the union found that 37 percent of the workers had suffered mental health problems in the past year, 79 percent said their health had deteriorated and 91 percent suffered stress.

In all of these categories a majority blamed their work—but hadn’t felt able to report it to bosses.

The workers maintain council homes and many want their jobs to be taken back in-house by Manchester City Council.

Following support from Labour Party members at a recent meeting in Blackpool, meetings are being organised with councillors and Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham.

Thanks to Mike Killian



# WEST'S LIBYAN SLAVE AUCTION

by DAVE SEWELL

**THE SLAVE auctions of the 21st century take place in Libya—but the biggest culprits are in the British, US and French governments and European Union (EU).**

Footage released by CNN news last week showed black men being sold for manual labour on farms for the equivalent of a few hundred pounds.

And other investigations by Unicef and the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) have exposed widespread sexual violence against women and children.

## Furious

Hundreds of protesters rallied at the Libyan embassy in Paris last Saturday. One told TV station France24, “We can’t let this kind of thing happen.”

It’s right to be furious, especially with the Western politicians who are responsible.

They worked with deposed Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to keep out migrants. Then when Libyans rose up

## REFUGEES AT a detention centre in Libya in 2012

in 2011, Britain and France launched a bombing campaign that turned the country into a hell-hole run by armed militias.

Parliament’s foreign affairs select committee blamed

David Cameron for “political and economic collapse, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations” and more.

Now the EU is making sure that any refugees trying to

leave Libya are trapped there.

Its ships patrol the sea between Libya and Italy—and the Royal Navy plays its part.

They destroy boats and hand people over to the

corrupt Libyan coastguard they help to fund.

The Italian government has even been accused of funding the warlords who run Libya’s militia.

EU-led border clampdowns

push desperate people onto ever more deadly routes.

A mass funeral was held in Italy last Friday for 26 Nigerian women and girls, who drowned alongside 64 others crossing the sea from Libya.

## Trafficked

The IOM believes the women were being trafficked for sexual exploitation.

But border controls are also to blame for pushing people into the grip of ruthless traffickers and slavers.

Theresa May likes to grandstand over modern-day slavery, but her solution is always to further criminalise undocumented migrants.

It stigmatises those who haven’t been trafficked against their will, and leaves those who have with nowhere to turn.

And Western leaders used the plight of women held as slaves by Isis to win support for new wars in Iraq and Syria that displaced thousands.

Resisting the return of slavery means killing the sick system of wars and borders that is responsible.

## Schools inspectors told to target Muslim girls

MUSLIM GIRLS in primary schools will be questioned by school inspectors if they wear a hijab or headscarf.

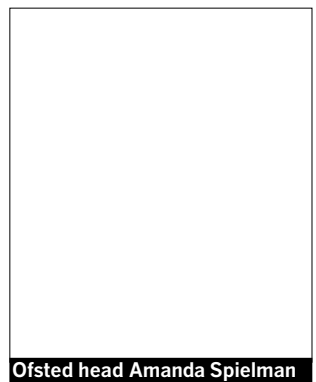
Ofsted schools inspectorate head Amanda Spielman announced the plan last weekend.

She declared that wearing a hijab “could be interpreted as sexualisation” of girls.

Muslims and others have reacted with anger.

In a letter to the Guardian newspaper Dr Sana Ramiz wrote, “In an attempt to copy my mother, I wore hijab as a young girl against the wish of my parents.”

“I would like to ask Amanda Spielman, will Ofsted inspectors be



Ofsted head Amanda Spielman

‘questioning’ young girls copying their mothers, whether by wearing hijab, lipstick or stilettos?”

Spielman said “creating an environment where primary school children are expected to wear the

hijab” is a problem. But nobody is doing this. She talked of “respecting parents’ choice” in how to bring up their children—implying that parents impose the hijab.

## Respecting

Spielman is not respecting Muslims—she is treating them as a problem.

Spielman said the new recommendation to inspectors is about “assessing whether the school promotes equality for their children”.

This implies that girls who choose to wear a hijab are more oppressed than others.

She then spoke about “fundamentalist groups

influencing school policy or breaching equality law”.

This taps into the idea that extremist Muslims are trying to influence schools, echoing the Trojan Horse letter in 2014.

The letter falsely claimed that Muslims were trying to take over schools in Birmingham to promote extremism and radicalisation.

The government used this to bring in further repressive measures against Muslims.

Telling Muslim girls what they can and can’t wear is not about liberating them—it’s about promoting anti-Muslim racism.

Sadie Robinson

## Anti-racists take refugee solidarity onto the streets

STAND UP To Racism (SUTR) supporters plan days of action this Saturday for the SUTR Calais Winter Appeal.

They will see stalls, collections and speak-outs in areas including Birmingham and Islington, north London.

SUTR groups across Britain are actively building solidarity and political support for refugees in northern France.

Care4Calais, which is jointly running the appeal, said there is a desperate shortage of items such



Child refugee in Dunkirk

as clothing and boots. But donations meant they could distribute aid to over 350 refugees in Dunkirk and Calais last weekend.

Direct solidarity will be >>>continued on page 18